

3 SURVEY RESULTS

This section summarizes the primary survey results from across the entire Bureau of Reclamation by organizational affiliation (i.e., Regional/Area Office, Commissioner's office, and Reclamation Service Center) and by type of position (i.e., professional/technical, administrative, managerial, and industrial/vocational trades). Differences among the overall, organizational, and positional results were also noted. All open-ended responses are summarized here. Figures that illustrate the results of every closed-ended question, along with the complete responses to open-ended questions, are presented by organizational affiliation and position in Appendices C–M.

For the most part, this section follows the survey format and presents results sequentially by section number and question number. Although the questions regarding demographic information appeared at the end of the survey (Section 5: Information About You), the demographic information is presented here first to provide a framework for evaluating the survey responses.

3.1 RESPONSE RATE

The Employee Customer Service Survey was mailed to approximately 6,200 Reclamation employees. In total, 2,789 responses were received, representing a response rate of 45%. Overall, although this response rate is very good for a self-administered mail survey, it was somewhat lower than expected given that the survey was internal. Two main factors may have contributed to the lower-than-expected response rate:

1. The bulk mailing may not have reached all employees in a timely fashion. Anecdotal reports to Argonne indicated that some surveys were received extremely late (up to a month after the mailing) and some were never received.
2. Because the entire Reclamation employee population was surveyed, employees who do not deal with customers on a regular basis may have determined that their opinions were not useful and therefore chosen not to respond.

The first factor seems to be random and would not bias survey results (i.e., no type of employee or particular office seemed to be unduly affected). The second factor could bias responses to Question 1.1 on the frequency of interaction between customers and employees. However, because it is likely that those who deal with customers on an annual or less-frequent basis did not respond in higher numbers than those who interact with customers regularly, the response rate for the survey's main population – employees who deal with customers on a regular basis – was likely to be higher than reported in the overall numbers.

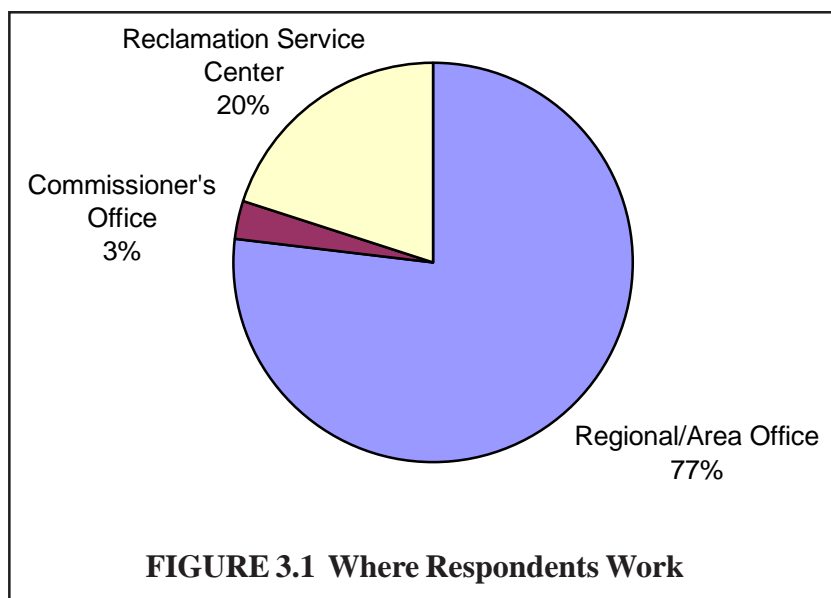
Response rates to individual questions varied from 27% to 98%. However, the average response rate for the entire survey, including both closed- and open-ended questions was 92%, which is extremely high and indicates that the survey questions were easy to read and understand and relevant to respondents. (Employees who identified they interact annually or less with customers and then were asked to skip to the end of the survey and not respond to the majority of the survey questions were not calculated in the response rates for those questions.) The response rate for the closed-ended questions was significantly higher than the response rate for the open-ended questions (96% versus 58%, respectively). This difference would be expected because open-ended questions require more time and energy from respondents in developing and defining answers.

The response rates indicate that the survey results are valid. Because the entire population was surveyed, there was no potential for bias from sampling (extrapolating results for the population as a whole from a statistical sample of the population). Also, with the exception of the potential for those employees who do not deal with customers to not respond, there does not appear to be any pattern to the nonresponses. Regions and position types were accurately represented in the makeup of the respondents (see Section 3.2).

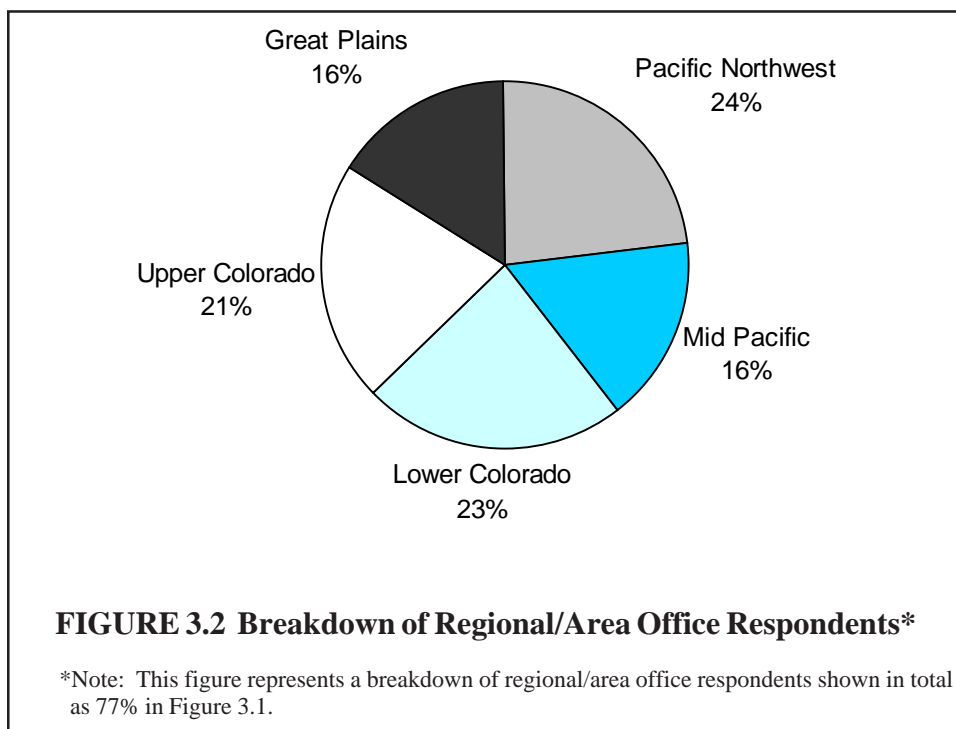
3.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

3.2.1 Question 5.1 — Please ✓ where you work.

Respondents were given three basic choices for organizational affiliations: Regional/Area Office, Commissioner's Office, and Reclamation Service Center (Figure 3.1). More than three-quarters of the responses came from Regional/Area Office employees. The Commissioner's Office, as expected, provided the lowest percentage of responses (3%). These numbers mirror Reclamation's employee population nearly exactly.

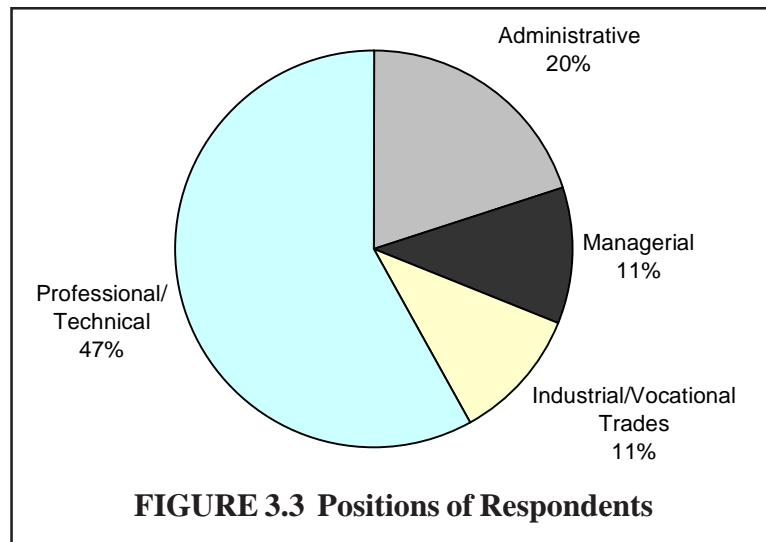


The Regional/Area Office responses were fairly evenly divided among the regions, with the Pacific Northwest having the highest percentage of respondents and the Great Plains and Mid-Pacific having the lowest percentages (Figure 3.2). Reclamation Customer Service Initiatives Team representatives reported that, for the most part, these percentages are representative of actual regional employee populations. However, the Great Plains and Mid-Pacific regions may be slightly underrepresented. Thus, in cases when the responses in these two regions would differ significantly from the overall responses, this underrepresentation would affect overall results. For instance, if Great Plains responses to a question or attribute were less favorable than the overall responses, the overall responses might look slightly more favorable than they actually should be because the less favorable responses from the Great Plains region would be underrepresented.



3.2.2 Question 5.2 — Please ✓ the category that best describes your position at Reclamation.

Respondents were given four choices to identify their employment positions: (1) professional/technical, (2) managerial, (3) administrative, and (4) industrial/vocational trades. The greatest number of respondents (47%) reported their position to be professional/technical (Figure 3.3). The next highest category was administrative (20%). Industrial/vocational trade employees and managerial employees each made up 11% of the respondents. These numbers seem consistent with the overall Reclamation employee population, which is still heavily influenced by engineers and increasingly by environmental personnel, both of whom are in the professional/technical category. The smaller representation of industrial/vocational trades is also consistent with the increased emphasis on transferring operations and maintenance functions to customers (primarily water districts), thus decreasing the population of vocational trades positions in Reclamation.



These numbers also correspond well to the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey, in which 45% of customers reported dealing most frequently with professional/technical staff, and 22% reported dealing most often with administrative staff. Customers generally dealt with managers more often (31%) and industrial/vocational trades staff less often (2%). These results are consistent with the employee responses, since many managers (44%) deal with customers on a daily basis, and 80% interact with customers at least quarterly. Managers are also much more likely to interact with multiple customers, so that each manager may regularly interact with several customers, increasing the percentage of customers that would individually report interacting with management.

For each region, the percentages of responses from some of the positional categories varied (i.e., regions had higher or lower percentages of specific types of staff that responded to the survey). Consistent with the higher overall survey responses in the Pacific Northwest, all position categories had the highest representation in this region, but percentages were notably higher in the industrial/vocational trade area and managerial area (12 and 6 percentage points, respectively, higher than the overall percentages). The Great Plains had a higher level of representation by managerial staff (16% as opposed to 11%). Upper Colorado had a lower percentage of industrial/vocational trades and professional/technical responses than the overall Reclamation response. The Mid-Pacific representation of all position types was proportional to the overall response.

3.3 SURVEY RESULTS

The remainder of this section presents results from the four main sections of the Employees Customer Service Survey: Section 1, Employees' Performance in Customer Service; Section 2, Your Role in Customer Service; Section 3, Reclamation's Performance (as an agency) in Customer Service; and Section 4, Bureau of Reclamation's Performance in Programs and Initiatives.

In the discussion of survey responses that follows, the overall Reclamation response (i.e., from all respondents regardless of organizational affiliation or position type) is presented first. It is then compared with external customer, organization, and position responses as appropriate. In this analysis,

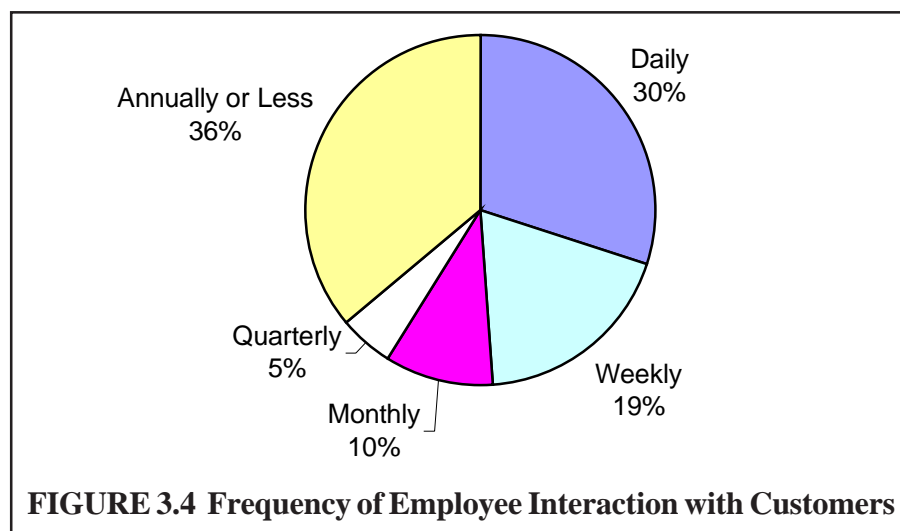
“significance” is generally defined as plus or minus five percentage points from Reclamation’s average. There are some exceptions, however. For example, if responses from an organization or group were consistently higher or lower than the Reclamation average for a given question having multiple performance measures, these findings were deemed significant, even if the differences were less than five percentage points. Complete data for each organization and position type are included in the following appendices:

Appendix C	Complete Data for Pacific Northwest Region
Appendix D	Complete Data for Mid-Pacific Region
Appendix E	Complete Data for Lower Colorado Region
Appendix F	Complete Data for Upper Colorado Region
Appendix G	Complete Data for Great Plains Region
Appendix H	Complete Data for Commissioner’s Office
Appendix I	Complete Data for Reclamation Service Center
Appendix J	Complete Data for Professional/Technical Staff
Appendix K	Complete Data for Managerial Staff
Appendix L	Complete Data for Administrative Staff
Appendix M	Complete Data for Industrial/Vocational Trades Staff

3.3.1 Section 1: Employees Performance in Customer Service

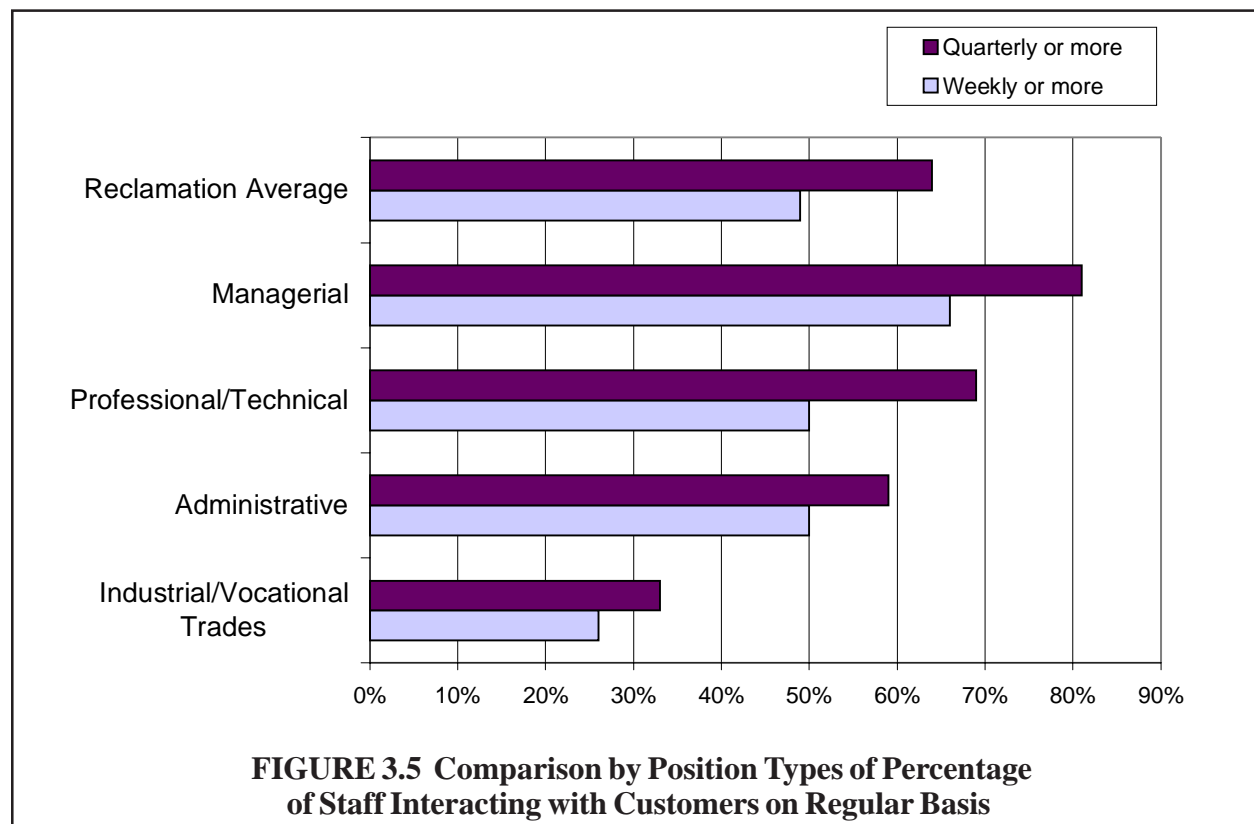
3.3.1.1 Question 1.1 — Please ✓ how often you interact with Reclamation’s external customers (i.e., customers outside the agency)?

Respondents were asked how frequently they interacted with Reclamation’s external customers: (1) daily, (2) weekly, (3) monthly, (4) quarterly, or (5) annually or less (Figure 3.4). Employees that interacted with customers only annually or less frequently were directed to skip to the end of the survey (Section 5) to fill out demographic information.

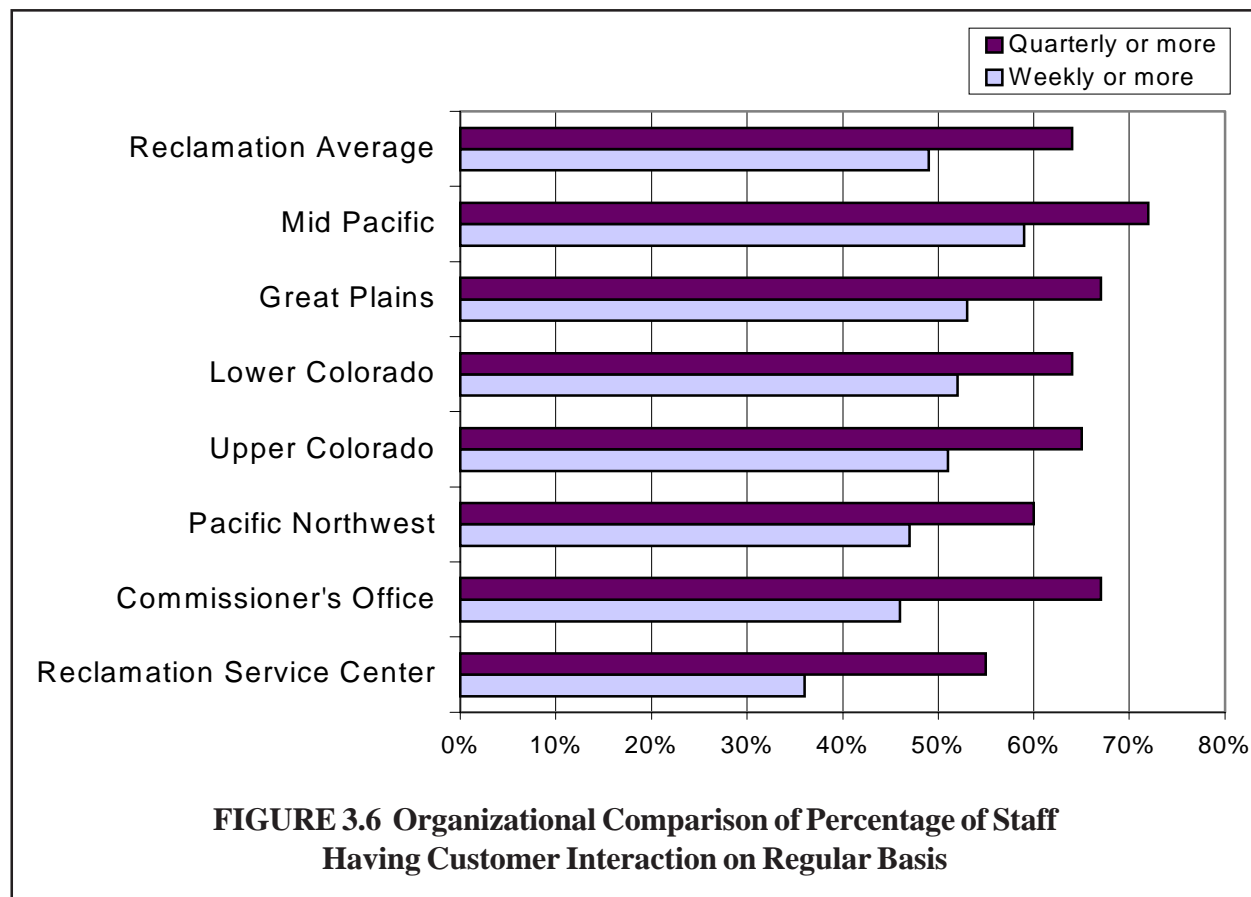


Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents reported interacting with customers *at least* quarterly, and nearly half (49%) reported interacting with customers on a weekly or daily basis. These numbers are much higher than expected. Prior to the survey, the Customer Service Initiatives Team estimated that half or more of the employees would take the “off ramp” for question 1.1 because they do not interact with customers often. As mentioned earlier, it is possible that the percentage of employees who reported frequent interaction with customers is higher than the actual percentage because some of those who do not deal with customers frequently did not find the survey salient and did not respond. This situation would create a bias suggesting that, overall, employees interact with customers more regularly. However, the actual number of employees in this survey who reported interacting with customers at least quarterly was 1,829, which is a sizable number. When nonresponses are factored in, the number of employees interacting with external customers at least quarterly could be as high as 4,064 and is likely to be more than 3,000.

The types of staff members who reported interacting with customers on a regular basis are consistent with job descriptions (Figure 3.5). Managers reported interacting with customers more frequently, while administrative staff and industrial/vocational trades staff reported interacting with customers less frequently. Professional/technical staff – who represented the largest number of total responses and therefore heavily influenced the overall results – interacted with staff slightly more frequently than the average (69% versus 61% interacting with customers on a quarterly or more frequent basis). The type of employee who interacts with customers most frequently (on a weekly or daily basis) is similar to the type who interacts with customers on a quarterly or monthly basis. However, it is notable that half of the administrative staff interact with customers on a weekly or daily basis.



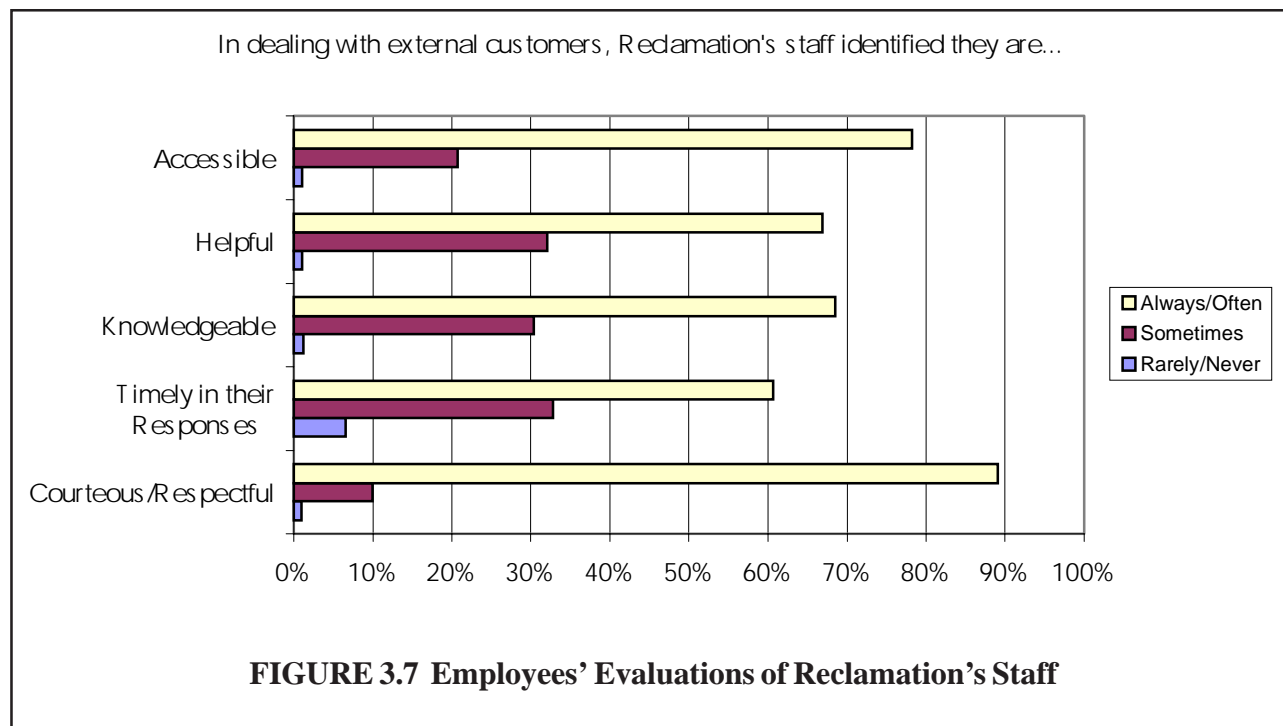
Generally, the Mid-Pacific reported the highest level of interaction with customers (Figure 3.6). This result is consistent with the active constituencies in the California area and correlates to the customer responses from the Customer Satisfaction Survey, in which Mid-Pacific customers reported higher levels of interaction with Reclamation. The Pacific Northwest reported a lower than average level of interaction with customers. It is unclear why this would be. The Commissioner's Office staff reported higher than average levels of interaction with customers weekly, monthly, and quarterly but lower than average daily interactions. These results are consistent with the more formal but regular type of interaction corporate staff have with customers.



3.3.1.2 Question 1.2 — Please circle how you agree with the following statements...

Respondents were asked to evaluate Reclamation staff's interaction with customers in five areas: (1) accessibility, (2) helpfulness, (3) knowledge levels, (4) timeliness of responses, and (5) courteousness/respectfulness. A six-point Likert scale was used to categorize responses as always, often, sometimes, rarely, never, or don't know. This question duplicated Question 2.4 from the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Employees generally gave themselves high marks in all categories, with more than 60% of the respondents rating Reclamation staff as always or often exhibiting each of the listed attributes (Figure 3.7).



Employee ratings were generally consistent with customer ratings in the same categories. Both groups rated staff highest in being courteous/respectful and lowest in being timely in their responses. Overall, employees rated themselves slightly lower than customers in all categories except accessibility, where 78% of employees rated Reclamation staff as always or often accessible, while 74% of customers provided the same ranking. The lack of accessibility of staff was a significant finding of the Customer Satisfaction Survey. The most notable difference in the ratings between customers and employees was with respect to the attribute measuring job knowledge, where 78% of customers found Reclamation staff to be always or often knowledgeable, but only 69% of employees rated the staff as always or often knowledgeable. Both employee responses to the open-ended questions for the Employee Customer Service Survey and customer comments in the open-ended responses for the Customer Satisfaction Survey praised the knowledge and expertise of Reclamation staff. The lower employee ratings for helpful and knowledgeable may reflect concerns among employees (noted specifically in the employee comments to open-ended questions) over reduced training opportunities and loss of experienced staff. These concerns are less evident to customers, although some customers made similar comments.

There were organizational differences in the responses to this question (Table 1). Upper Colorado and Mid-Pacific regions as well as the Reclamation Service Center rated Reclamation staff higher than the overall responses in most attributes. The Great Plains, Pacific Northwest, and Lower Colorado regions rated staff lower in most categories. The Commissioner's Office rated staff significantly lower – some by as much as 24 percentage points – in all attributes.

TABLE 1 Organizational Comparison of Percentages of Respondents Answering Always or Often to Five Attributes in Question 1.2

Region	In dealing with external customers, Reclamation's staff are...				
	Accessible	Helpful	Knowledgeable	Timely in their Responses	Courteous/ Respectful
Mid Pacific	85%	68%	69%	66%	89%
Upper Colorado	79%	66%	73%	64%	93%
Pacific Northwest	77%	66%	72%	59%	89%
Lower Colorado	76%	65%	64%	59%	86%
Great Plains	73%	67%	66%	54%	88%
Reclamation Service Center	81%	68%	69%	63%	92%
Commissioner's Office	71%	54%	57%	43%	77%
Overall average*	78%	67%	69%	61%	89%

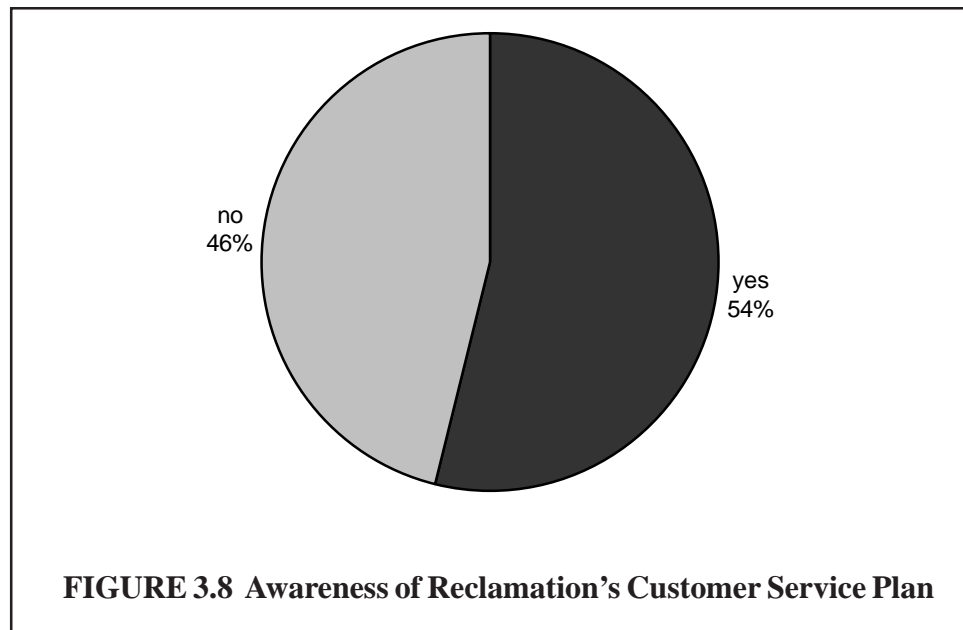
*Average of total responses without weighting to compensate for uneven responses from various organizational units.

There were fewer differences among the position types. The industrial/vocational trades employees rated staff lower in all categories except timeliness, where they rated staff slightly higher (2 percentage points in the always/often categories) than did the overall response. Managerial staff rated staff higher in all categories except timeliness, where they rated staff slightly lower (2 percentage points in the always/often categories) than did the overall response.

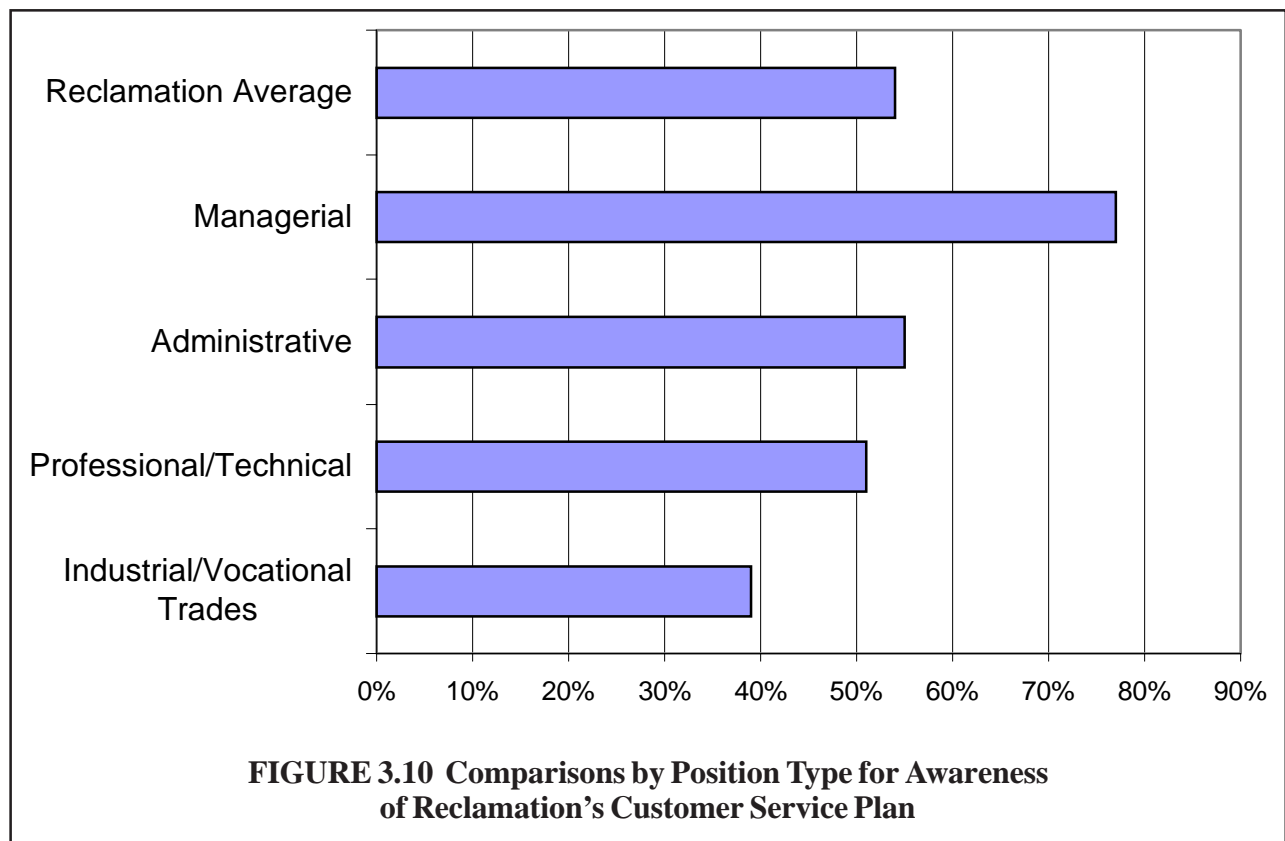
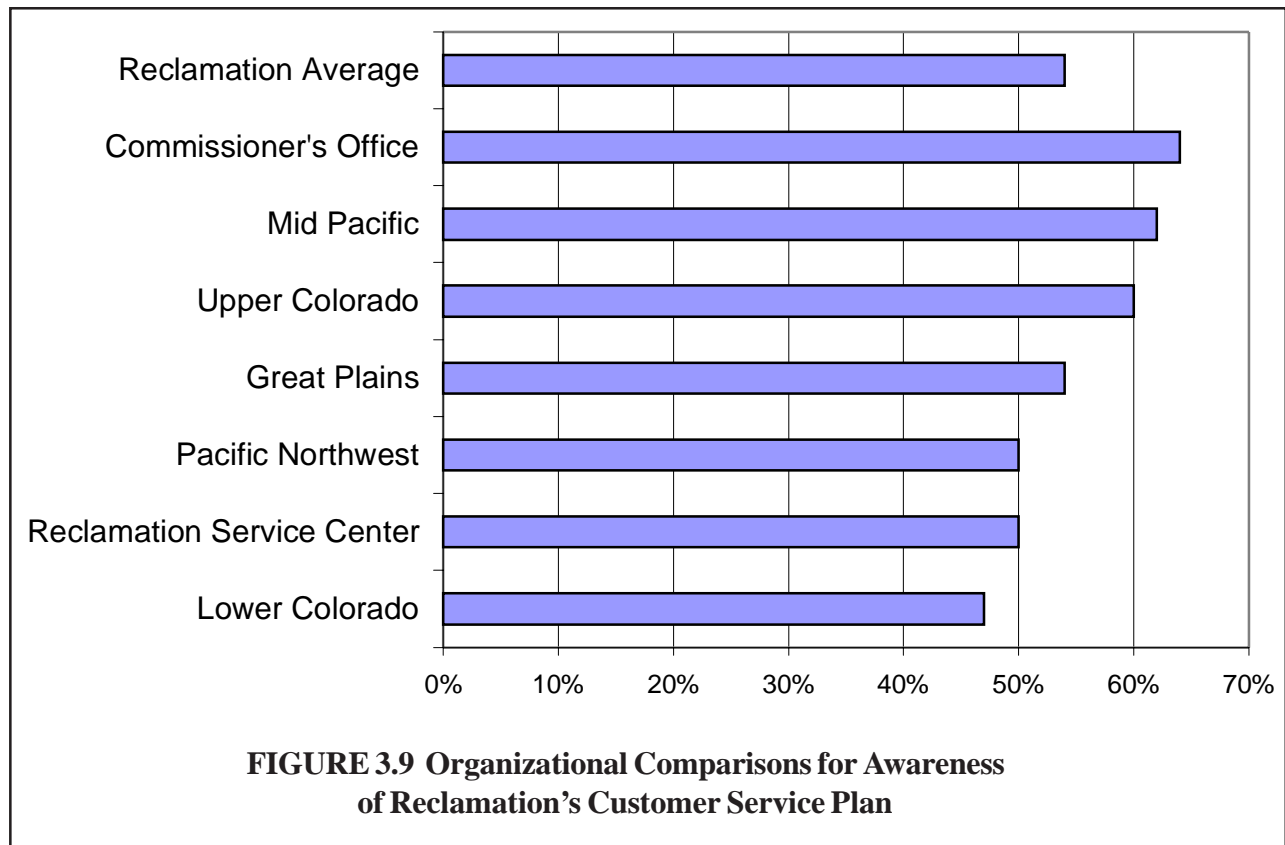
3.3.2 Section 2: Your Role in Customer Service

3.3.2.1 Question 2.1.1 — Are you aware of Reclamation's Customer Service Plan?

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of Reclamation's Customer Service Plan, which sets customer service standards and guidelines for the agency. Slightly less than half of the respondents (46%) indicated they were not aware of the plan (Figure 3.8). This finding is significant, given that the only respondents to this question were employees who interact regularly with customers. Therefore, official agency policy on customer service either has not been distributed to employees or is being ignored by almost half of the employees who responded to the Employee Customer Service Survey and interact with customers regularly.

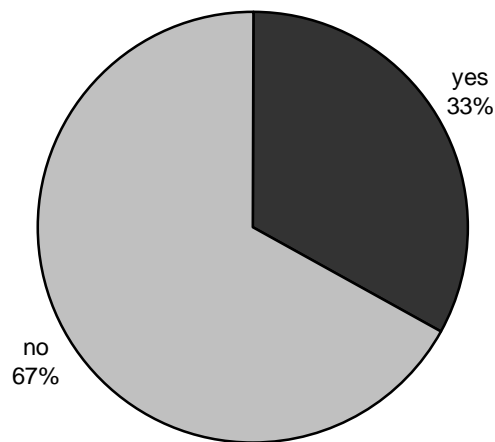


There were variations in responses by organizational affiliations and position types (Figures 3.9 and 3.10). There was greater awareness of the Customer Service Plan in the Mid-Pacific and Upper Colorado regions and the Commissioner's Office. These two regional offices reported higher than average interaction with customers, suggesting the emphasis on customer service in these offices is greater than it is in other regions. The Commissioner's Office is a policy office and thus should at least be aware of agency policies on customer service. Only half of the employees in the Pacific Northwest region and the Reclamation Service Center were aware of the Customer Service Plan. Their lower awareness may be partly explained by the higher concentrations of industrial/vocational trades staff in these offices. Managerial staff were most aware of the plan, and industrial/vocational staff least aware. This result suggests that there may be a problem in communicating policies from the management level to the trades level, which would be consistent with comments from the trades level employees. In their responses to open-ended questions, they expressed frustration in being "out of the loop" of management decision making.



3.3.2.2 Question 2.1.2 — Have you read Reclamation's Customer Service Plan?

Employees were asked whether they had read Reclamation's Customer Service Plan. Although more than half reported to be aware of Reclamation's Customer Service Plan, only one-third of employees had actually read it (Figure 3.11). The differences in percentages for the organizational and position types were consistent with the results for Question 2.1.1 (see Figures 3.12 and 3.13). The Commissioner's Office and Mid-Pacific and Upper Colorado had higher percentages of employees who read the plan; the Pacific Northwest and Reclamation Service Center had the lowest percentage of staff who read the plan. More than half of the managerial staff (53%) read the plan, but only 28% of the industrial/vocational trades staff read it.

**FIGURE 3.11 Employees that Have Read Reclamations Customer Service Plan**

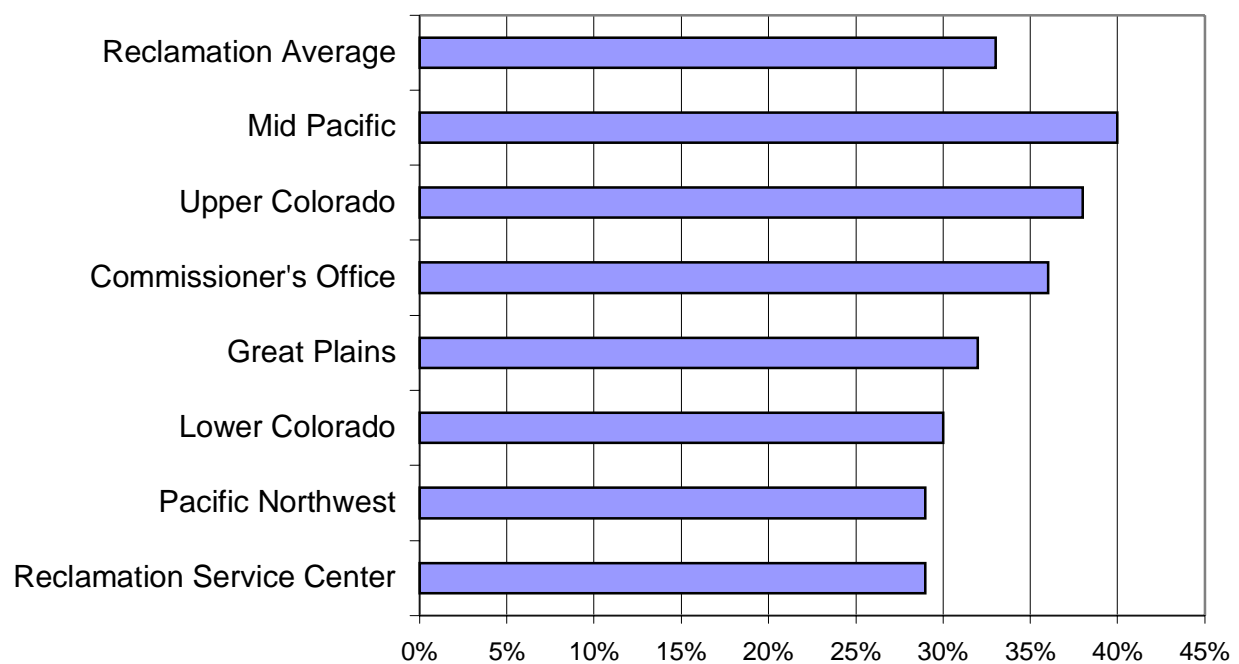


FIGURE 3.12 Organizational Comparison of Employees that Have Read Customer Service Plan

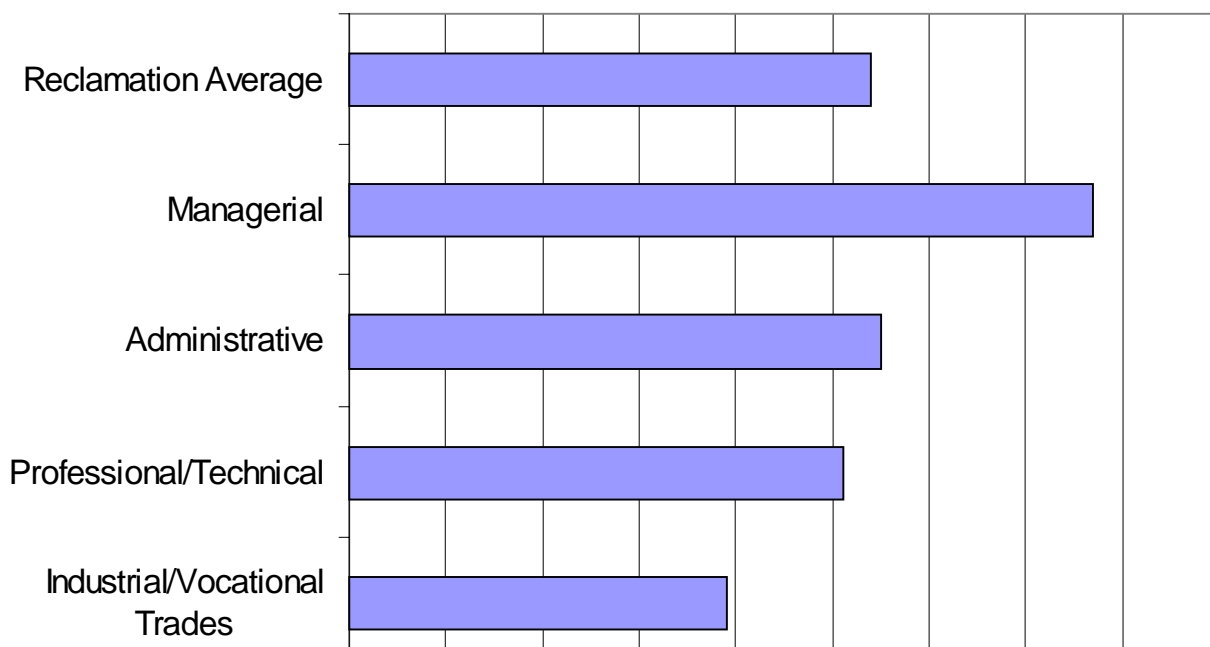
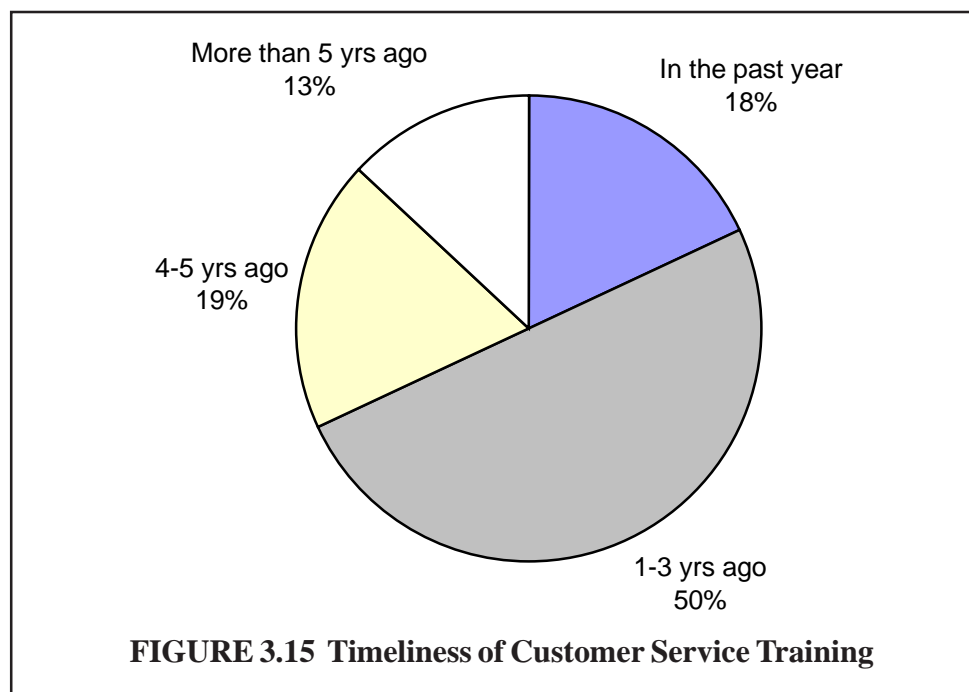
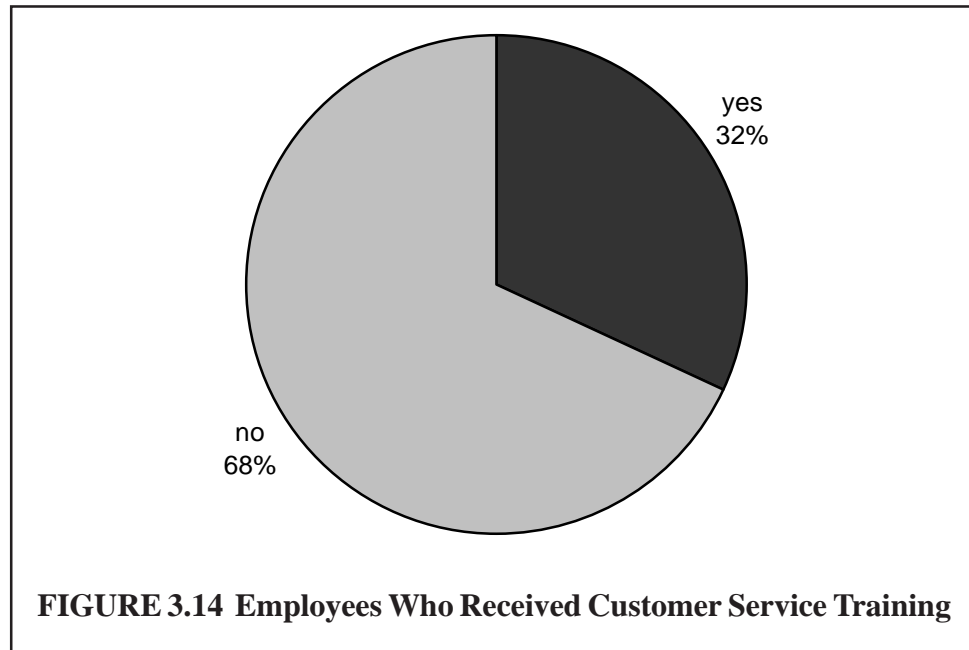


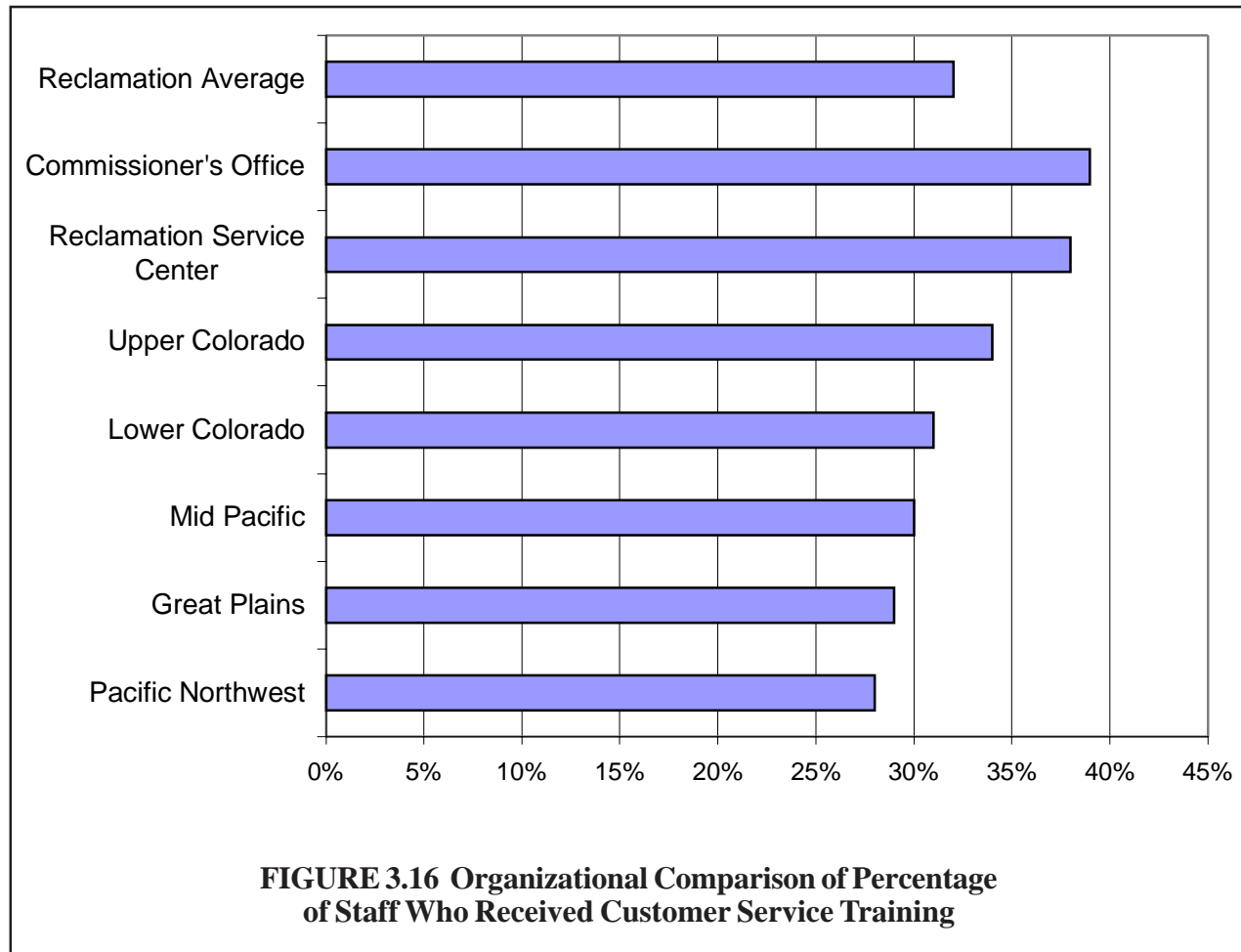
FIGURE 3.13 Comparisons by Position Type of Employees that Have Read Customer Service Plan

3.3.2.3 Question 2.2 — Have you ever received training covering customer service principles, practices, and/or techniques?

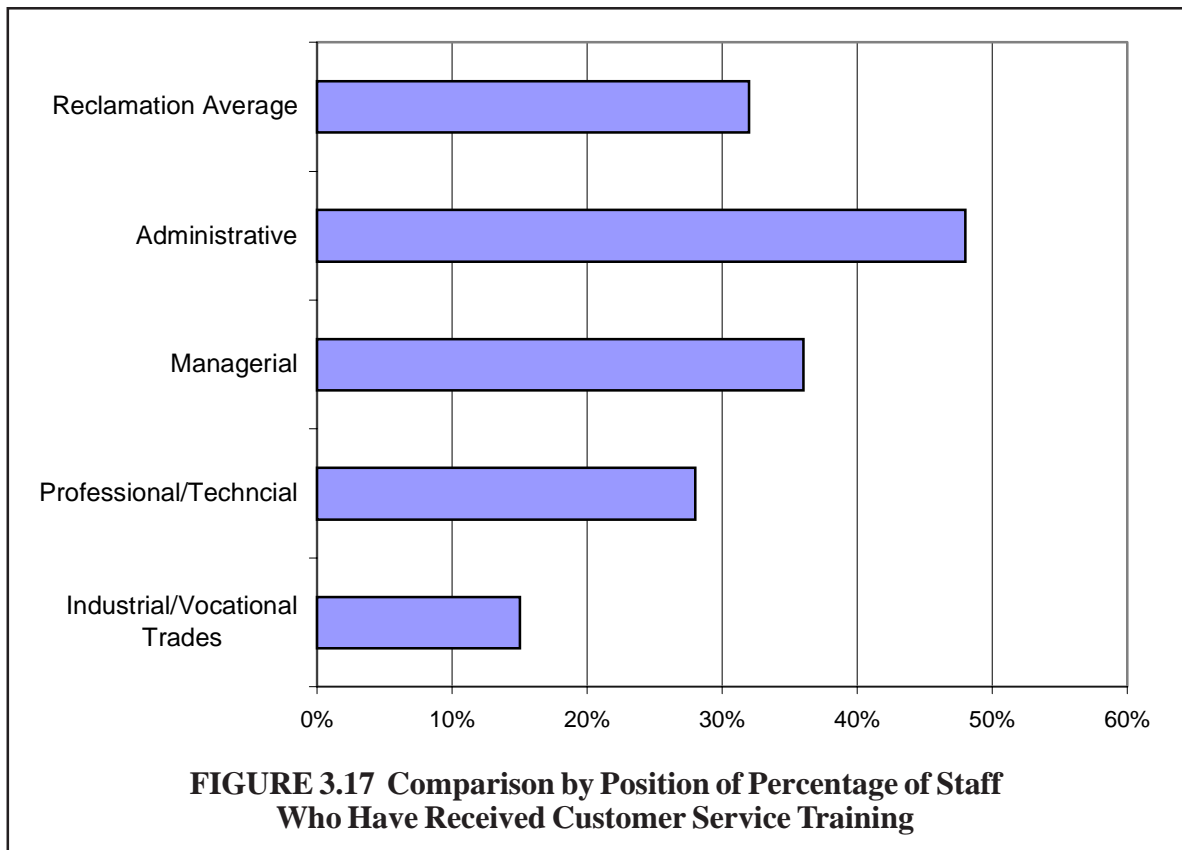
Respondents were asked whether they had ever received customer service training. If they had received training, they were asked to note how long ago they received it. Nearly one third (32%) of employees reported that they had received training (Figure 3.14). Of those that received it, most (68%) had received training within the past three years (Figure 3.15).



A higher percentage of the Commissioner's Office and Reclamation Service Center staff had received training than had any of the regional office staff (Figure 3.16). Especially notable is the low percentage of training received by the Mid-Pacific region staff, who reported in other parts of the survey to have more frequent and positive interactions with customers than did the other regions.



The type of employees who had received training was also somewhat surprising (Figure 3.17). The administrative staff had the highest percentage of employees who had received training. Yet administrative staff, on average, deal with customers less frequently than do the other position types. One explanation is that administrative employees, who typically work for a variety of staff, may have received training in order to help them better respond to internal customers and supervisors. However, the same analysis does not seem to cross over to the industrial/vocational trades staff, who have similar roles in their fields. It is also likely that the customer service training received was not targeted to Reclamation's external customers nor did it coincide with the Reclamation Customer Service Plan given the low percentage of staff who had read the plan (see 3.3.2.3).



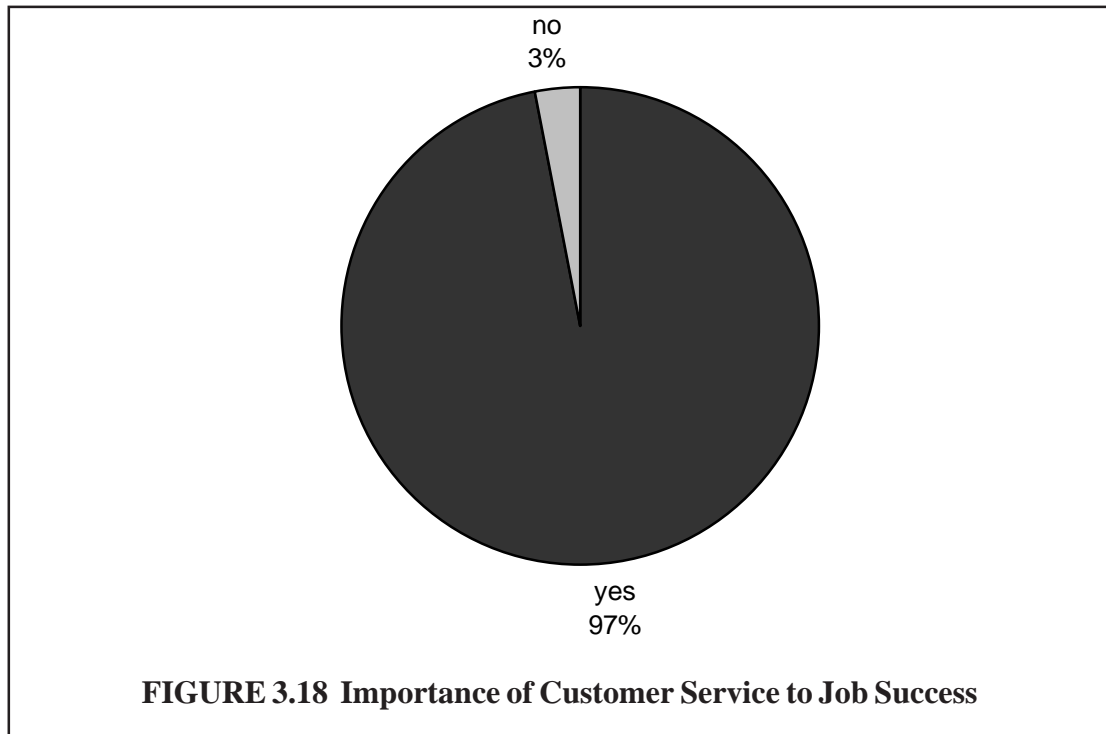
3.3.2.4 Question 2.3 — Do you believe customer service is an important part of succeeding in your job responsibilities?

Nearly every respondent (97%) said that customer service was an important part of succeeding in his or her job responsibilities (Figure 3.18). This situation was generally true across organizational units, with the highest percentage (100%) in the Reclamation Service Center and the lowest percentage (96%) in the Lower Colorado and Pacific Northwest regions. The one notable difference among position types was in the industrial/vocational trades area, where 28% of respondents said that customer service was not important to their job success. This is consistent with the reduced level of customer interactions by this group.

3.3.2.5 Question 2.4 — Are you comfortable in your interactions with customers?

A very high percentage (94%) of employees reported that they were comfortable in their interactions with customers (Figure 3.19). These overwhelmingly positive results are somewhat surprising, given the limited awareness of the Customer Service Plan and the reportedly low occurrence of customer service training for employees. The results may be indicative of the long-standing customer-employee relationships that have been established, since both Reclamation's customers and employees have long-term relationships with the agency. The results were reasonably consistent among regions, with the exception being Great Plains, where only 89% of employees reported that they were comfortable with customer interactions. This could be because Great Plains has a higher percentage of

electric power customers, and the electric power industry is rapidly changing, leading to greater unease on the part of all involved with the industry (see Whorton et al. 1998). Responses from the industrial/vocational trades employees were lower than average, with 13% reporting that they were not comfortable with their interactions with customers. This result may reflect this group's lack of training, as well as its less frequent interactions with customers (i.e., few deal with customers on a daily basis).






3.3.2.6 Question 2.5 — What is the single most important action Reclamation could take to help you improve customer service?

Employees were asked to comment on the single most important action Reclamation could take to help them improve customer service, and 1,270 comments were provided (69% response rate). Although the comments covered a multitude of subjects, they did follow a few general themes. Generally, employees were positive in their thoughts and responses, reflecting their belief that quality customer service was important to their work and a significant factor determining their success (see responses to Question 2.3). The themes are discussed in detail below. The main suggestions that employees provided included these:

- Provide training in a wide array of areas,
- Ensure timeliness and availability of staff,
- Increase agency management involvement,
- Be innovative when dealing with customers,
- Increase resources, and
- Give employees more freedom in customer interactions.


Provide Training in a Wide Array of Areas




The most frequent recommendation was for staff training. Overall, 19% of the comments dealt with the need for more or better training. In particular the administrative and industrial/vocational staff were particularly vocal about the need for training: over one-quarter of the comments from these groups dealt with training. Training was called for in a number of areas, including customer service, systems used to facilitate customer service, and technical areas that would allow employees to be more efficient and proficient in their job responsibilities. These comments are consistent with responses to Question 2.2, which showed that only one-third of the Reclamation staff who interact with customers on a regular basis had formal training in customer service techniques. Examples of comments include these:

-  *More trained people trained in customer service.*
-  *All employees should have training on customer service, not just the clerical.*
-  *Training on how to deal and converse with a wide range of people with diverse training.*






Timeliness and Availability of Staff

Many of the staff expressed frustration over the timeliness and availability of Reclamation staff and the timeliness of Reclamation products. Significant frustration was expressed with regard to the use of phones, voice mail, the flexibility of work schedules, and the overall accountability of staff. Ten percent of the managerial position comments pertained strictly to telephones, and 8% of the administrative position comments involved voice mail. Many employees blamed staff shortages for exacerbating these problems. Some comments follow:

-  *All voice mail boxes should have an option to speak with someone immediately. Some customers need to speak with a person and not a recorded message. The next most important [is] the need for better mail service. Our mail is not all opened and/or date stamped.*



-  *Educate employees in proper use of voice mail. For example, it should be updated daily, every morning, by every employee. Callers should not have to guess whether or not you're in the office on a given day.*
-  *Get rid of most scheduled work at home. Employees should be allowed to work at home only when unusual circumstances require and only for a day here and there basis.*
-  *Be there by being available via phone, e-mail, internet, etc., so communication can begin.*





The responses closely mirror the comments of the customers in the Customer Satisfaction Survey. Customers expressed concern over timeliness in three areas: (1) the responsiveness of Reclamation employees to phone calls; (2) the responsiveness of various organizational units within the agency to formal requests for information; and (3) the responsiveness of the agency to meeting its deadlines, either self-imposed or legislatively driven. Timeliness continues to be a significant issue requiring attention. More than 20 % of the managerial responses to this question indicated concerns with responsiveness of staff and the overall organization. Professional/technical staff expressed similar concerns about responsiveness with over 10% of all comments dealing with this issue. Some representative responses follow:

-  *Emphasize timeliness on all levels.*
-  *More timely response and willingness to help.*
-  *Better access to individuals, I have heard it is almost impossible to find our phone numbers through directory assistance.*
-  *More attention to deadlines so reports, etc., due to public are on time.*
-  *Timely response and work production. So many personnel changes have left huge knowledge holes with changes in land management. Practices that result in long delays.*

Increase Agency Management Involvement





Some comments from employees indicated that agency management needs to be more visible and vocal in support of customer service. The principal messages presented with regard to this theme were for management to (1) get more involved in interactions with customers, (2) to be consistent in the articulation of policies, and (3) support staff members in their dealings with customers. Representative comments included these:

-  *Commitment from leadership — the leaders need to show by example and hold us accountable.*
-  *Direction. Need management available to meet with the customers to give the customers a sense of Reclamation's direction (vision).*

-  *I think managers could do a better job of keeping employees informed when managers make decisions that affect how employees do work and provide information to customers. We are the last to know.*
-  *Keep lower line and technical employees apprised of upper management decisions, policy and instruction. More guidance. Do we have a set of policy, Reclamation instruction, guidelines, etc., that could be available in every office? Improve our inability to make a decision and be consistent with all customers.*
-  *Keep the people on the ground informed of what management is doing.*
-  *Knowing what the "front office" is telling our customers regarding sensitive matters and what "promises" are being made.*





Be Innovative When Dealing with Customers



Several insightful comments called for Reclamation staff to abandon old ways of doing business and consider new ideas when dealing with customers. Employees believe new thinking is needed to be successful in a competitive world. Although little specific direction was offered, some representative comments include these:

-  *Think like a customer.*
-  *Listen.*
-  *Define the role of Reclamation in regional water resources management.*
-  *Sell our publications.*

Increase Resources

Many employees expressed significant frustration with the declining human resources in the agency and the need to hire more people. Reclamation continues to struggle with recent severe reductions in staffing, coupled with expanded responsibilities due to legislation, its new mission, and a variety of other drivers. Although this situation has become the "norm" for working at Reclamation, employees are tired of "doing more with less" and may need help redefining their job responsibilities to make their jobs accomplishable in the new environment. Some representative comments included these:





-  *Keep the people on the ground informed of what management is doing.*
-  *Allow more staff time in work assignments for meeting/interacting with customers. Number of projects staff are required to carry does not allow for adequate communication in many instances.*
-  *Give me some staff to work with me. I'm spread too thin.*
-  *Get us more people. We are severely understaffed for the amount of quality work that needs to be performed.*

-  Hire more staff which allows me time to focus more intently on customer service.
-  Allow me enough time to build and maintain solid working relationships. Right now I only deal with customers when an issue demands it.

Employees did offer some suggestions in addition to the most prevalent call for more staff. Several employees expressed concern that “family-friendly” work practices, such as work at home, made work harder for traditional employees. Others called for better utilization of existing staff.

Give Employees More Freedom in Customer Interactions

Many employees commented that they were limited in their ability to communicate with customers. The reasons for this situation varied, including not having enough latitude to make decisions, not having enough time to adequately respond to customer concerns, and not having enough authority to deal with customers individually. Some of the representative comments included these:

-  Allow employees flexibility with dealing with customers the way they (employees) feel most comfortable.
-  Allow the employees the flexibility required to provide good customer service.
-  Continue to provide me opportunities to get to know the customers on an individual, face to face basis.
-  Empower employees to make low-level decisions so that customers can get answers to their questions and requests.

3.3.3 Section 3: Reclamation’s Performance (as an agency) in Customer Service

3.3.3.1 Question 3.1 — Please circle your level of agreement with the following statements...

Respondents were asked to evaluate Reclamation’s performance with regard to customers by rating seven attributes: (1) providing easy access to the people customers need to contact, (2) answering customers’ needs with a single point of contact, (3) providing accurate information, (4) providing consistent information, (5) being committed to understanding customer needs, (6) using plain language in communicating with customers, and (7) valuing its relationships with customers. A six-point Likert scale was used to categorize responses as always, often, sometimes, rarely, never, or don’t know. This question duplicated Question 1.1 from the Customer Satisfaction Survey. The attributes in this question were designed to measure performance with regard to Reclamation’s customer service principles as outlined in its Customer Service Plan (USBR 1994).

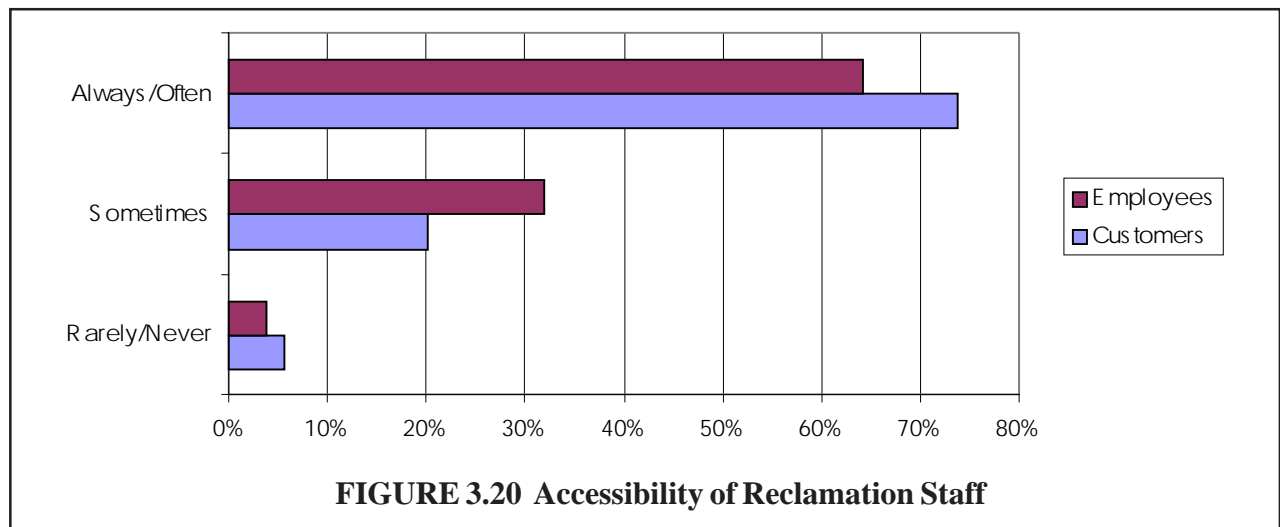
Generally, employees assessed Reclamation’s performance positively; a majority of the respondents reported that Reclamation always or often exemplified all but one of the attributes in the question. The one area where employees did not feel Reclamation performed well was in maintaining single points of contact for customers.

For most of the attributes, employees' responses to Employee Customer Service Survey the were less positive than were customers' responses to the Customer Satisfaction Survey. For two attributes, however, this was not the case: understanding customers' needs and valuing customers' relationships. For these attributes, employees rated Reclamation's performance more favorably than customers.

Table 3.2 summarizes organizational variations in responses to all of the statements in this question. Similar to the results for Question 1.2, the Mid-Pacific and Upper Colorado regions rated Reclamation's performance more favorably in all attributes than did the overall response. The Commissioner's Office staff rated Reclamation's performance significantly lower (10 to 22 percentage points) in all attributes. Table 3.3 summarizes variations in responses by position. Administrative staff rated performance higher in all attributes, and industrial/vocational trades staff rated performance lower in all attributes. Managerial staff rated performance significantly lower (19 percentage points) in providing accurate information and notably higher (5 percentage points) in valuing customer relationships. A discussion of the findings on each attribute follows.

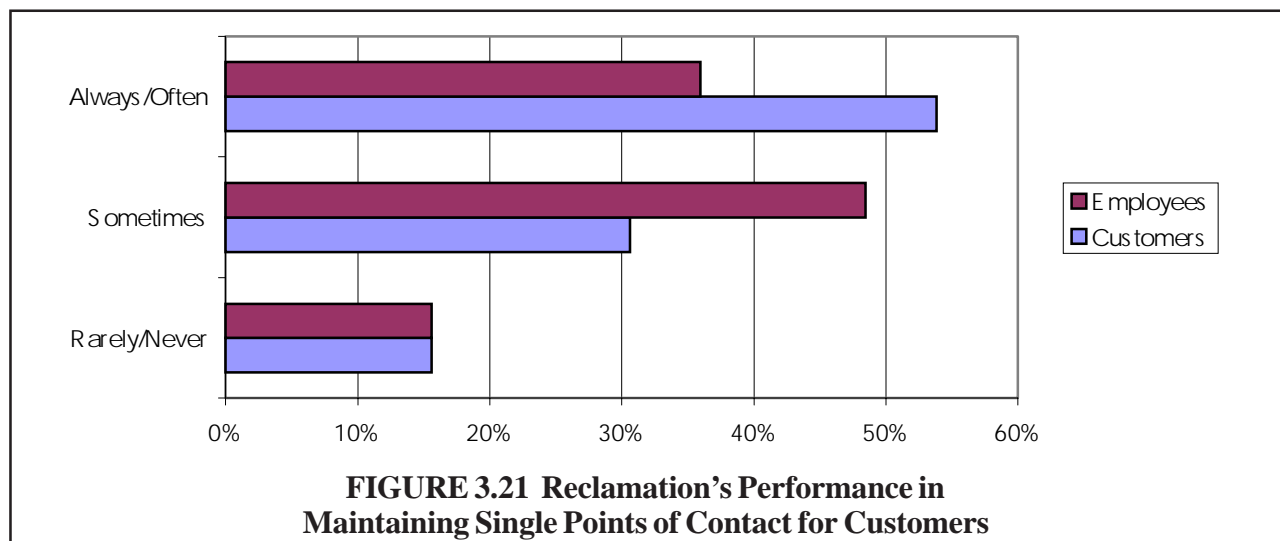
Providing Access to Points of Contact

For the first attribute, 63% of respondents to the Employee Customer Service Survey said that Reclamation always or often provides customers with easy access to the people they need to contact (Figure 3.20). This result was 11 percentage points lower than the customers' response to the same question in the Customer Satisfaction Survey (Whorton et al. 1998). The results are similar to the attribute for accessibility of Reclamation staff in Question 1.2 of the Employee Customer Service Survey and Question 3.2 of the customer Satisfaction Survey.



Maintaining Single Point of Contact

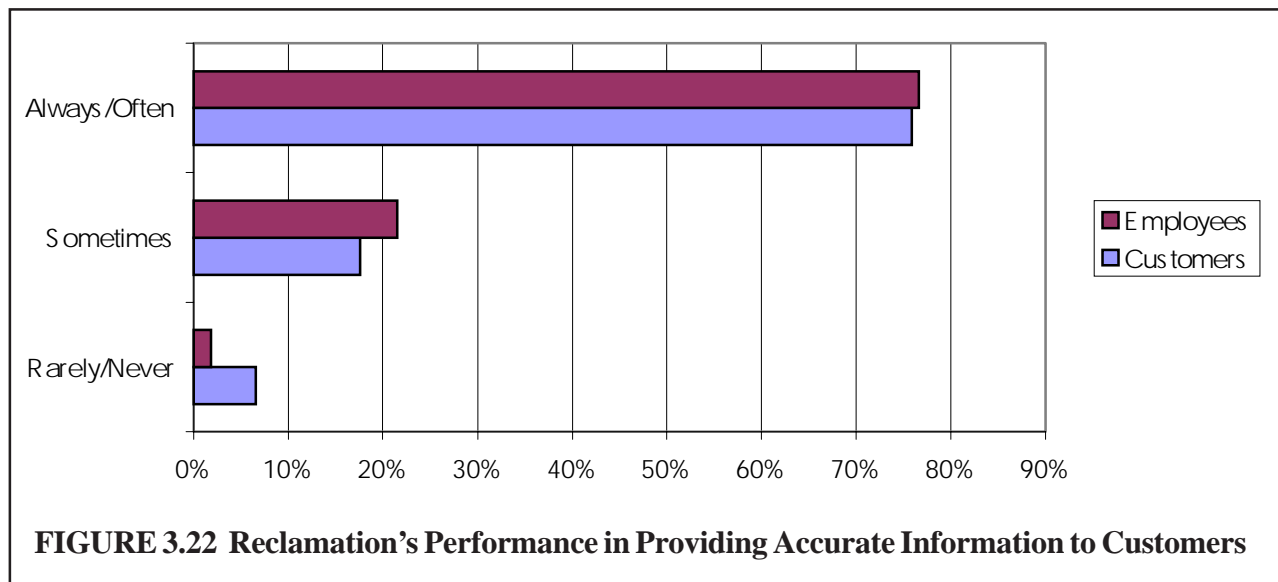
For the second attribute, 36% of respondents to the Employee Customer Service Survey said that Reclamation always or often answers customers' needs with a single point of contact (Figure 3.21). Nearly two-thirds of the respondents did not have faith in Reclamation's providing a single point of contact, despite the fact that this is one of its customer service principles (USBR 1994). Moreover, 16% of respondents said that Reclamation rarely or never maintains single points of contact for customers.



Again, Reclamation staff rated the agency much more harshly than did its customers, 56% of whom said Reclamation maintained single points of contact. However, 16% of the customers also reported that Reclamation rarely or never maintains a single point of contact, and overall, this category was one of the lowest rated for customers and is clearly an area where Reclamation must improve in order to meet its customer service principles. Organizational variances for this attribute were similar to the prior question rating accessibility of staff. The main difference was that the Reclamation Service Center responses were more similar to the overall responses. Administrative staff, while still negative in their response, were much less negative than other groups, with those answering always or often was 8 percentage points higher than the overall, and only 9% responding in the rarely and never categories (as opposed to 16% overall).

Providing Accurate Information to Customers

Employees generally felt Reclamation provided accurate information to customers (Figure 3.22). This was the employees' highest rated attribute for this question with 77% of respondents reporting that Reclamation always or often provided accurate information. The overall numbers are consistent with customers' responses. Providing accurate information also was the highest rated in the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

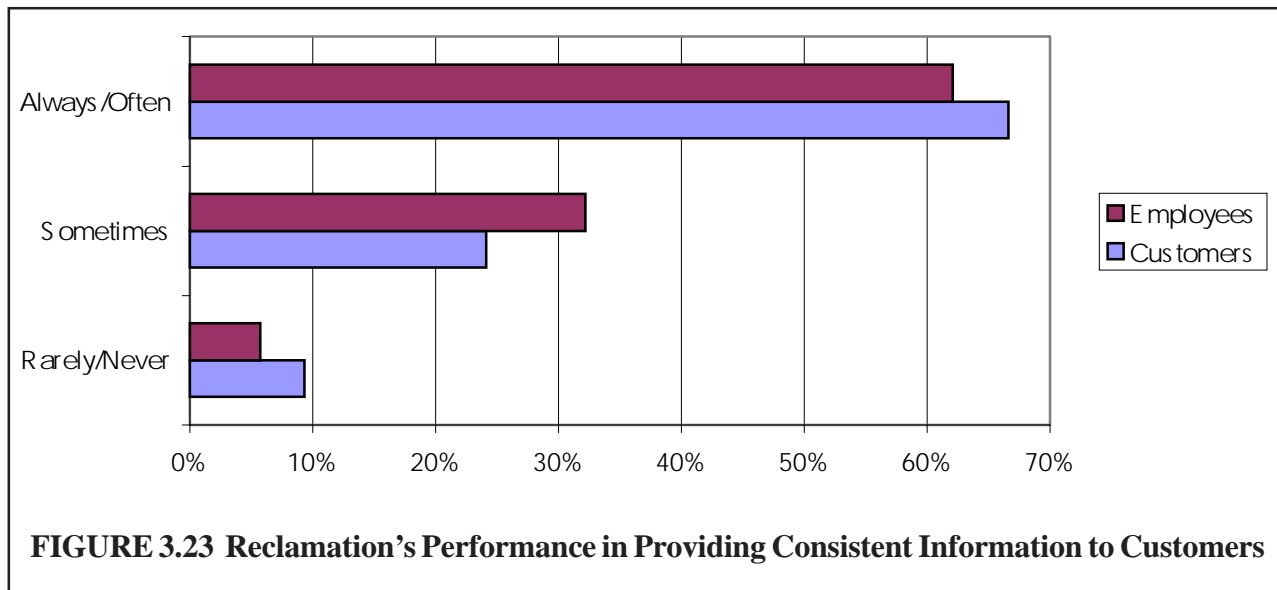


Commissioner's office staff were notably more negative in their responses, with only 64% answering in the always or often categories (see Table 2).

The most striking variance with respect to this question was in position types (see Table 3). Managerial and vocational/technical trades responses were 19 percentage points lower in the always and often categories than the overall response. Eight percent of the industrial/vocational trades responses were in the rarely or never categories, as compared with less than 2% overall.

Providing Consistent Information to Customers

Employees felt Reclamation performed less well, although still respectably, in the fourth attribute, with 62% of employees reporting that Reclamation always or often provides consistent information (Figure 3.23). These results compare to customer responses of 67% for the always or often categories for the same attribute.

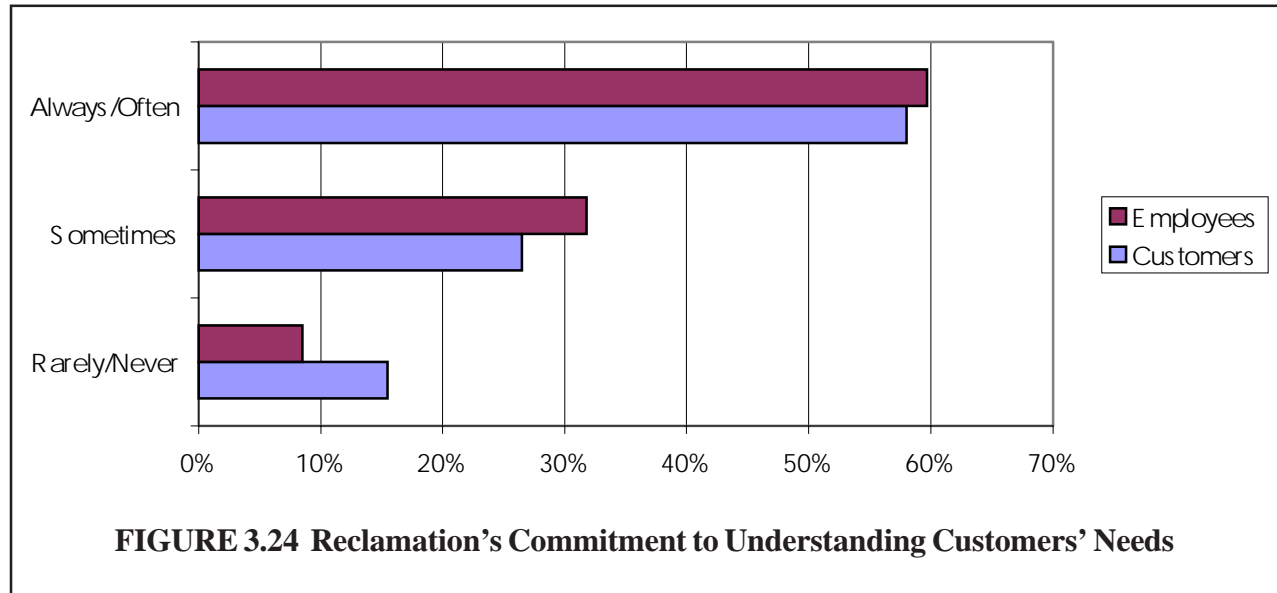


The nearly 40% of employees that reported that Reclamation only sometimes, rarely, or never provides consistent information to customers may reflect, in part, a perception that internal policies and directions are not always consistent. The professional/technical and industrial/vocational trades positions specifically expressed in responses to the open-ended questions the need for consistency or consistent application. It is interesting, however, that the lowest ratings for this attribute came from the Commissioner's Office staff, which may suggest a frustration on their part that corporate policies are not consistently applied at the regional and area office levels (see Table 2). Because customers most frequently deal with local staff (see Whorton et al. 1998), they may be receiving different answers from different offices, a condition that was in fact reported in the Customer Satisfaction Survey responses. Both employees and customers also reported feeling frustrated that local staff were not empowered to make decisions, a condition that may lead to inconsistency as well as inefficiency.

Of the position types, industrial/vocational trades staff reported low agreement with the statement that Reclamation provides consistent information, with 47% of respondents indicating that Reclamation did this only sometimes, rarely, or never (see Table 3). Again this result may be explained by the feeling on the part of these staff that they are out of the communication chain. In contrast, 75% of administrative staff felt that Reclamation always or often provided consistent information to customers. Although administrative staff generally rated Reclamation's performance more favorably than other groups, the difference is largest for this attribute. It is not clear why.

Commitment to Understanding Customers' Needs

For the fifth attribute, 60% of employees said overall that Reclamation is always or often committed to understanding customers' needs (Figure 3.24). These results are consistent with Customer Satisfaction Survey responses of 58% for the same categories. However, 16% of customers felt that Reclamation rarely or never was committed to understanding their needs, which was much more negative than the 9% response employees provided for this category.

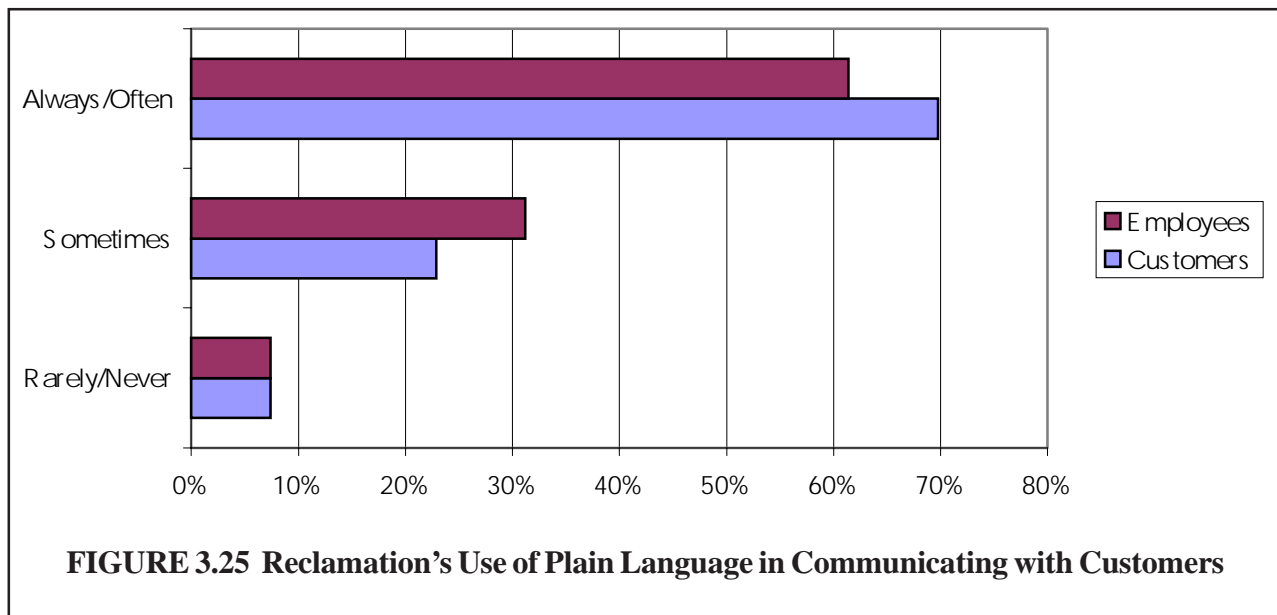


The administrative and managerial positions and the Reclamation Service Center responses were above the Reclamation average. In contrast, the Commissioner's Office response was markedly lower than the overall response percentages for this attribute (see Tables 2 and 3). Only 38% of the Commissioner's Office staff felt that Reclamation was always or often committed to understanding customers' needs, and 12% felt that Reclamation rarely or never was committed to understanding customers' needs.

Also consistent with other survey results, the responses from the industrial/vocational trades staff were notably lower in this attribute as well, with 22% of this group reporting that Reclamation rarely or never is committed to understanding customers' needs (see Table 3).

Use of Plain Language in Communicating with Customer

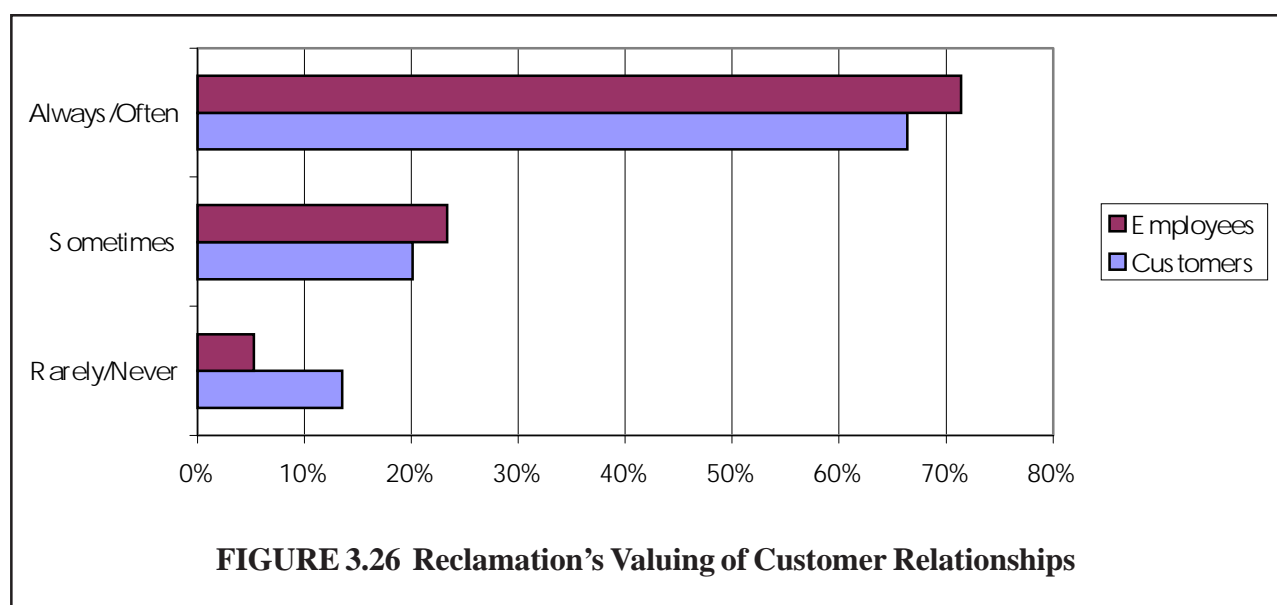
The sixth attribute measured Reclamation's use of plain language, which is both a customer service principle in Reclamation's Customer Service Plan and a presidential directive (Presidential Memorandum, June 1, 1998). Overall, 61% of employees responded that Reclamation always or often uses plain language in communicating with customers (Figure 3.25). Customers rated this performance attribute higher, with 70% reporting that Reclamation always or often used plain language in their communications.



Again, Commissioner's Office staff rated performance significantly lower than the overall response with less than half (44%) reporting that Reclamation always or often uses plain language in communicating with customers, and 12% reporting that Reclamation rarely or never does (see Table 2). Administrative staff rated performance notably higher with 69% of responses in the always and often categories (see Table 3).

Value Placed on Customer Relationships

The final attribute for this question measured employees' perceptions of the value Reclamation places on customer relationships. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the employee respondents reported that Reclamation always or often values relationships with customers, while only 5% believed it rarely or never did (Figure 3.26).



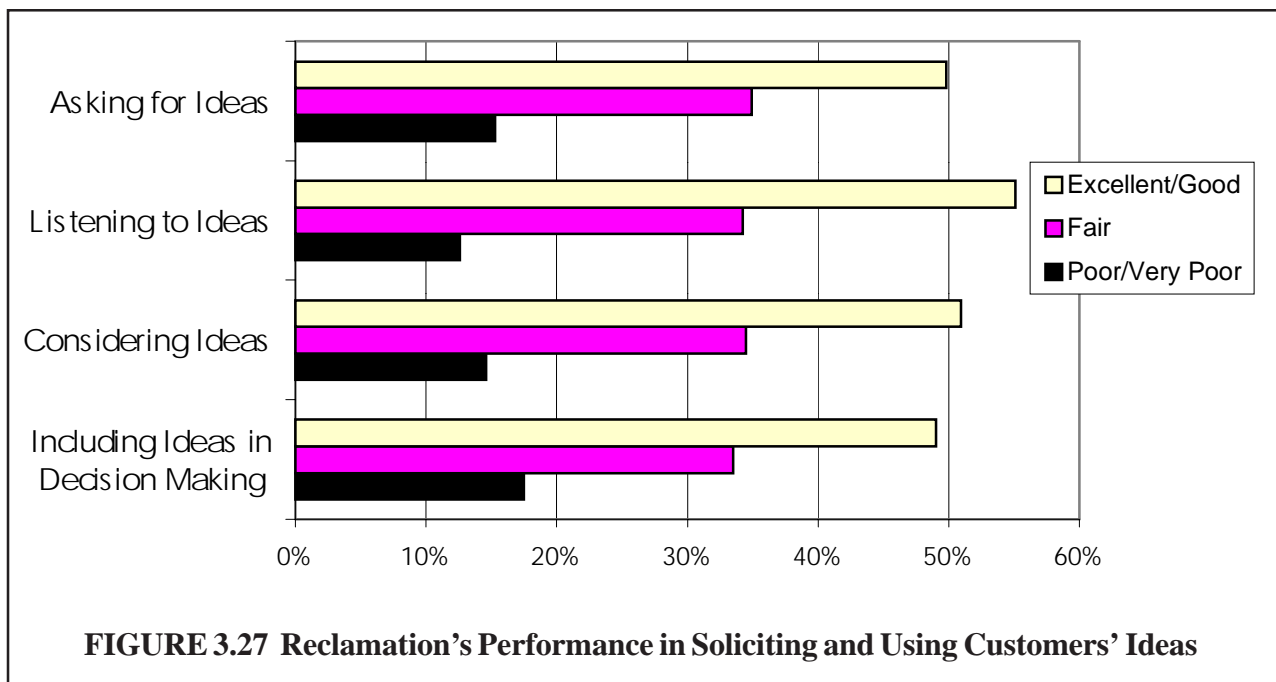
This is one of two attributes in which the employees' responses in the Employee Customer Service Survey were notably less favorable than customers' responses in the Customer Satisfaction Survey. In the Employee Customer Service Survey, over 70% of respondents said Reclamation always or often valued customer relationships, while a surprisingly high 13% of respondents to the Customer Satisfaction Survey said Reclamation rarely or never valued customer relationships, and 66% of customer respondents said that Reclamation always or often did..

Consistent with the other attributes for this question, the Commissioner's office staff rated Reclamation's performance significantly lower than other offices (see Table 2). Industrial/vocational trades employees also rated performance significantly lower (see Table 3).

3.3.3.2 Question 3.2 — Please rate the Bureau of Reclamation's performance in asking for, listening to, considering, and including customers' ideas in decision making.

Employees were asked to rate Reclamation's performance in four areas: (1) asking for customers' ideas, (2) listening to customers' ideas, (3) considering customers' ideas, and (4) including customers' ideas in decision making. A six-point Likert scale was used to categorize responses as excellent, good, fair, poor, very poor, or not applicable.

Overall, about half of the respondents positively rated Reclamation's treatment of customers' ideas (Figure 3.27). The ratings for listening to and considering ideas were slightly higher, and the ratings for asking for and including ideas were lower. The results suggest that employees believe Reclamation will listen to customers when concerns are brought before the agency. It should be noted that statutory or other Federal requirements may limit the agency's ability to ask for or incorporate customers' ideas into decision making..



Customers responses to this question were similar to employees except in the area of including ideas in decision making. Here, customers were significantly more negative than employees with only 40% saying that Reclamation is excellent or good in including ideas in decision making and 29% saying that Reclamation is poor to very poor. (Whorton et al. 1998).

Table 4 presents regional differences for Question 3.2. Consistent with the prior survey results, Mid-Pacific and Upper Colorado regions rate Reclamation's performance higher than other offices. The Commissioner's Office rated Reclamation's performance notably lower.

TABLE 4 Organizational Variations for Question 3.2 (Excellent and Good Categories)

Region	Asking for Customers' Ideas	Listening to Customers' Ideas	Considering Customers' Ideas	Including Customers' Ideas in Decision Making
Mid-Pacific	58%	60%	59%	52%
Upper Colorado	53%	55%	50%	49%
Pacific Northwest	52%	55%	49%	48%
Lower Colorado	47%	54%	51%	45%
Reclamation Service Center	47%	56%	52%	52%
Great Plains	43%	56%	51%	52%
Commissioner's Office	41%	44%	37%	41%
Overall average	50%	55%	51%	49%

Table 5 presents variations among position types for Question 3.2. Managerial and administrative staff rated Reclamation's performance slightly higher than did the overall response. Industrial/vocational trades staff again rated Reclamation's performance lower than did any of the other position categories and notably lower (4 to 9 percentage points) than did the overall response.

TABLE 5 Variations by Positions for Question 3.2 (Excellent and Good Categories)

Position Type	Asking for Customers' Ideas	Listening to Customers' Ideas	Considering Customers' Ideas	Including Customers' Ideas in Decision Making
Managerial	53%	59%	53%	51%
Administrative	52%	56%	53%	50%
Professional/technical	49%	54%	50%	49%
Industrial/vocational	45%	49%	46%	40%
Overall average	50%	55%	51%	49%








3.3.3.3 Question 3.3 — What do you think is Reclamation's greatest strength in providing customer service?

Employees were asked what they thought was Reclamation's greatest strength in providing customer service, and 940 responses were received (52% response rate). This question was designed to define the array of internal strengths that employees believe Reclamation draws on in dealing with its customers with the intention of building on those strengths to improve customer service. Respondents to these questions were limited to individuals who deal directly with customers.

As they did for question 2.5, responses to this question followed general patterns. Comments were classified into three main categories: (1) quality of Reclamation staff, (2) commitment to customers, and (3) Reclamation's reputation.

Quality of Reclamation Staff

A large majority of comments identified the quality of Reclamation's staff as being its greatest strength in providing customer service. Employees saw themselves as knowledgeable and willing to accommodate and service customers' needs. However, a small number of them expressed concerns over whether the agency intends to maintain the expertise needed, given its desire to move in a new direction. Some representative comments received include these:

-  *Allow employees flexibility with dealing with customers the way they (employees) feel most comfortable.*
-  *Excellent human resources.*
-  *Having responsible technical staff to provide products they are proud of.*
-  *Honesty. Everyone I work with to my knowledge has been honest with customers.*
-  *A competent staff highly committed to public service. Technical expertise. But we are losing it.*
-  *The individuals that do "go the distance" and provide the best customer service they can.*
-  *Reclamation has an experienced and knowledgeable engineering staff that needs to be utilized to a fuller extent.*

It is not unusual for staff to believe they are the greatest strength in achieving good customer service. Customer service is, more often than not, people dealing with people. Nevertheless, conspicuously absent as responses to this question were any meaningful thoughts on the agency's organization or its management structure as being strengths with respect to customer service.





Customers made remarks similar to those of the staff about Reclamation employees being a strength in achieving good relationships. Customers generally gave high marks to Reclamation staff for being courteous, knowledgeable, and helpful in their relationships with them.

Commitment to Customers

Corresponding with the belief that Reclamation's greatest strength is its people, numerous employees commented that a commitment to good customer service was a key strength. These comments are consistent with employees' opinions on the value of customer service. More than 97% of Reclamation's employees who deal with customers identified customer service as an important aspect of their jobs and a key to their success.




Employees commented that Reclamation cares about its customers and, for the most part, does a good job communicating with customers, listening to their concerns, and trying to respond to all customer concerns. Although communication and involvement were highlighted in other portions of the survey as areas in which Reclamation needs improvement, employees did give Reclamation credit for sincere effort to deal with these areas, if not for consistent follow-through.

Representative comments included these:

-  *Willingness to try to help.*
-  *We know what we do and try to help them no matter what they need.*
-  *We bend over backwards.*
-  *The commitment to improve customer service and delegating more authority to the lower levels of area offices who deal directly with the customers and better understand their needs.*

Reclamation's Reputation

A few of the comments received expressed Reclamation's historic mission as a strength. Some comments include these:

-  *Technical knowledge in water supply.*
-  *Good public image developed historically.*
-  *Water/Power.*

Absent were any meaningful comments on Reclamation's new mission and actions being taken as part of that mission as being a strength for the agency. It appears that some employees who deal in customer service see Reclamation's historic roles as the direction the agency should be taking. The call for more consistency and more leadership on issues affecting Reclamation go hand-in-hand also support this conclusion.

3.3.4 Section 4: Bureau of Reclamation's Performance in Programs and Initiatives

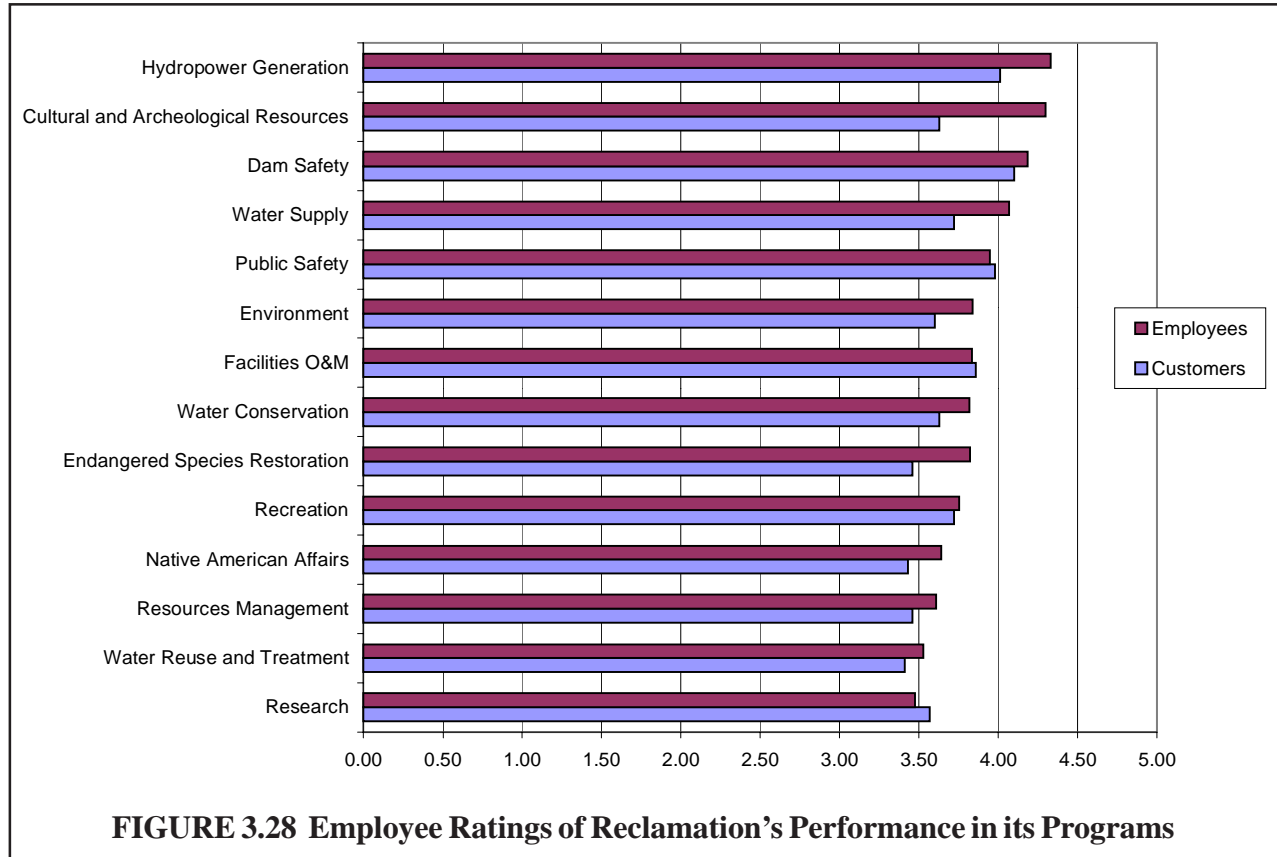
This section of the survey duplicated questions in the Customer Satisfaction Survey for the purposes of comparing customers' and employees' perceptions with regard to (1) performance in specific programs and initiatives and (2) the value and perceived value of those programs and initiatives to customers.

3.3.4.1 Question 4.1 — Please rate the Bureau of Reclamation’s performance in the following programs and initiatives.

Employees were asked to rate the 13 Reclamation programs and initiatives listed below as excellent, good, fair, poor, very poor, or don’t know. An “other” category was added as the 14th option for employees to rate a program or initiative that was not listed.

- Cultural and archeological resources,
- Dam safety,
- Endangered species restoration,
- Environment,
- Hydropower generation,
- Facilities operations and maintenance
- Native American affairs,
- Public safety,
- Research,
- Resources management,
- Water conservation,
- Water reuse and treatment, and
- Water supply.

Figure 3.28 shows the mean ratings in descending order for each of these programs and initiatives as revealed by the Reclamationwide Employee Customer Service Survey responses. All of the programs and initiatives identified received mean scores that fell at least in the fair to good range (mean scores of between 3 and 4), and the hydropower generation, cultural and archaeological resources, dam safety, and water supply programs received a mean score of slightly more than 4, which is equivalent to a good or slightly better rating. For comparison purposes, the customer responses for the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also included in Figure 3.28.

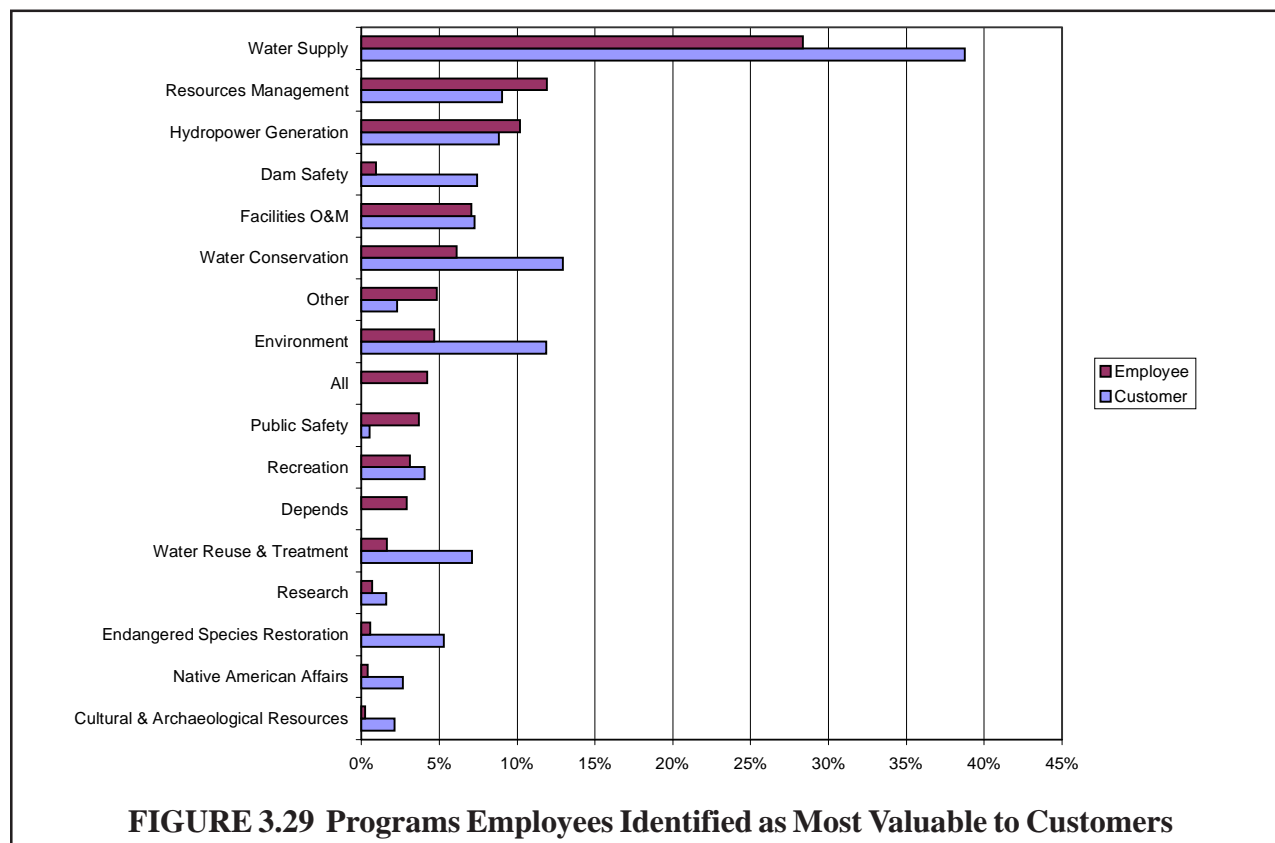


Overall, the employees' ratings of programs and initiatives were slightly higher than were those of the customers'. The employees' average rating for all programs (excluding the "other" category) was 3.87, as opposed to the customers' average of 3.67. Although lower than those given by the employees, the marks for hydropower generation and dam safety programs given by customers were relatively high in their overall response. The water supply program and especially the cultural and archaeological resources program were rated much lower by customers (3.72 and 3.63, respectively).

Although there were some differences in the relative ratings of the programs and initiatives among the offices and positions, the same four programs were rated highest by all but the industrial/vocational trades staff who rated dam safety the sixth highest rated program and recreation the fourth highest; the other three programs were rated the same. Also, for some of the regions and position types, mean scores were either consistently higher or lower (Table 3.5). The Upper Colorado region rated every program except cultural and archaeological resources (4.01) and Native American affairs (3.59) higher than did the Reclamationwide responses. Upper Colorado responses to all of the closed-ended questions also were generally more favorable to Reclamation than were the overall responses.

3.3.4.2 Question 4.2 — Which program or initiative listed above do you believe is the most valuable to customers?

Respondents were asked to identify which program or initiative listed in Question 4.1 they thought was the most valuable to customers. Seventy percent responded. Figure 3.29 displays the results. The other category includes other listed programs, such as construction and lands management programs, as well as the nonspecific response of "other." The customer ratings from the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also shown in Figure 3.29.



The greatest number of employee respondents (more than one-quarter) indicated that water supply was the most valuable program. This response was consistent among all groups in the survey (regions and positions), and this program was also the one identified in the Customer Satisfaction Survey as being the most valuable by the largest number (39%) of respondents. A sizable number of employee respondents (7%) indicated that this question was difficult to answer because of the varying interests of different customer groups. There were regional variations in the order in which the other programs received the most responses. Table 3.6 identifies, in order of most responses received, the programs identified as the most valuable (excluding the depends/all category). Although the intent of this question was not to rank valuable programs. Tables 3.6 and 3.7 identify the programs in terms of rank for comparison purposes. They are not ranked by value but by the total number of respondents that chose the particular category.

TABLE 6 Comparison of Most Valuable Program Rankings by Geographic/Organizational Boundaries

Region	Water Supply	Hydropower Generation	Facilities O&M	Dam Safety	Resources Management	Water Conservation
Pacific Northwest	1	2	4	5	3	6
Mid-Pacific	1	4	6	3	2	5
Upper Colorado	1	4	6	3	2	5
Lower Colorado	1	4	6	3	2	5
Great Plains	1	2	4	3	5	7
Commissioner's Office	1	2	4	7	7	6
Reclamation Service Center	1	5	6	2	4	7
Reclamation average	1	3	5	4	2	6
Customer average*	1	5	7	6	4	2

* Customer average was derived from results of 1998 Customer Satisfaction Survey (Whorton et al. 1998).

There were several notable differences in the rankings between employees and customers. First, the environment program was rated seventh in the overall employee responses but was rated third highest by customers. Both the Commissioner's Office and the Reclamation Service Center respondents ranked environment third in their lists of most valuable programs, but the regional offices ranked it much lower (from sixth in Upper Colorado to tenth in Great Plains and Pacific Northwest). The reason why the ratings varied so much is not clear. Recreation also received a fair number of responses from some regions. It ranked sixth in the Great Plains and tied with environment in the Mid-Pacific and Pacific Northwest in percentages of employees who rated it as the most valuable program.

There were also differences in the employee response to Question 4.2 among the position types. Table 3.7 identifies, in order of most responses received, the programs identified by each office as the most valuable (excluding the depends/all category). Administrative staff identified environment as the most valuable program more often than other groups; 8% of respondents chose this category, which

made it the fifth highest ranked by this group. Administrative staff also varied from other position types in their assessments of the dam safety and facilities operations and maintenance programs, which they ranked lower — seventh and eleventh, respectively.

TABLE 7 Comparison of Most Valuable Program Rankings by Position Types


Position Type	Water Supply	Hydropower Generation	Facilities O&M	Dam Safety	Resources Management	Water Conservation
Professional/Technical	1	5	4	3	2	6
Administrative	1	3	11	7	2	4
Managerial	1	3	4	5	2	7
Industrial/Vocational	2	1	8	3	—	4
Reclamation Average	1	3	5	4	2	6
Customer Average	1	5	7	6	4	2


3.3.4.3 Question 5.3 — Please provide any additional thoughts and/or comments you would like to share about how Reclamation can help you in providing quality service to our customers.

Employees were asked to share any additional comments on how Reclamation could help them in providing quality customer service. This question was asked of all employees, including those who infrequently interact with customers. In total, 743 responses were received (27% response rate).

Responses received covered a broad range of themes, and no particular one was dominant. Feelings of cynicism and frustration were indicated in many comments. Clearly, many of Reclamation's employees are concerned about the future of the agency and how they will be impacted. Here are some comments that reflect this attitude.

 *Give up now.*

 *We are run by "politics." Not the best way to do the job.*

 *As an agency we don't have a direction. We don't know what types of projects to work on and no one seems to make a decision.*

 *Find a mission, make a plan with the employees, and follow it.*

The latter two comments above are of interest, given Reclamation's significant efforts to redefine its mission and direction over the last several years. More comments follow.

 *Reclamation continues to be unsure of its future role in the western United States.*

- ✍ The west does not need more water management; when BOR stopped being an engineering and construction agency, its usefulness to western expansion ended. Any activities beyond that mission just muddles the water.*
- ✍ Morale - I never thought it would get this low around this place. Team spirit - it is still a turf war out there.*

Some employees addressed their relationship with management.

- ✍ Reclamation's managers need to practice what they preach. They could care less about practicing water conservation and justifying the actions in acquiring goods and services.*
- ✍ I think management needs to take a closer look at their employees – possibly more recognition for doing their jobs and making them look good – rather than criticize and tell them they could and should have done more. With no support there isn't much initiative.*
- ✍ Reclamation has very poor management, engineers. They are production oriented and make poor leaders and ineffective managers.*
- ✍ Stronger managerial staff. Reward those who work hard and care. Revamp the classification system.*

Another area of concern that surfaced in response to this question and others was the lack of internal customer service. Apparently, some employees feel there is a lack of internal respect among Reclamation staff and their colleagues. Of particular concern were issues of availability and timeliness, which have been a constant concern in all aspects of customer service.

Although there is cynicism in the agency, employees also mentioned a number of positive aspects. Many employees expressed some degree of pride in working for Reclamation and in the overall mission of the agency. Many also wanted to become more involved in decision making and define areas in their jobs where they could have more positive impacts.

- ✍ This is a good start. Next, listen to what we are telling you.*